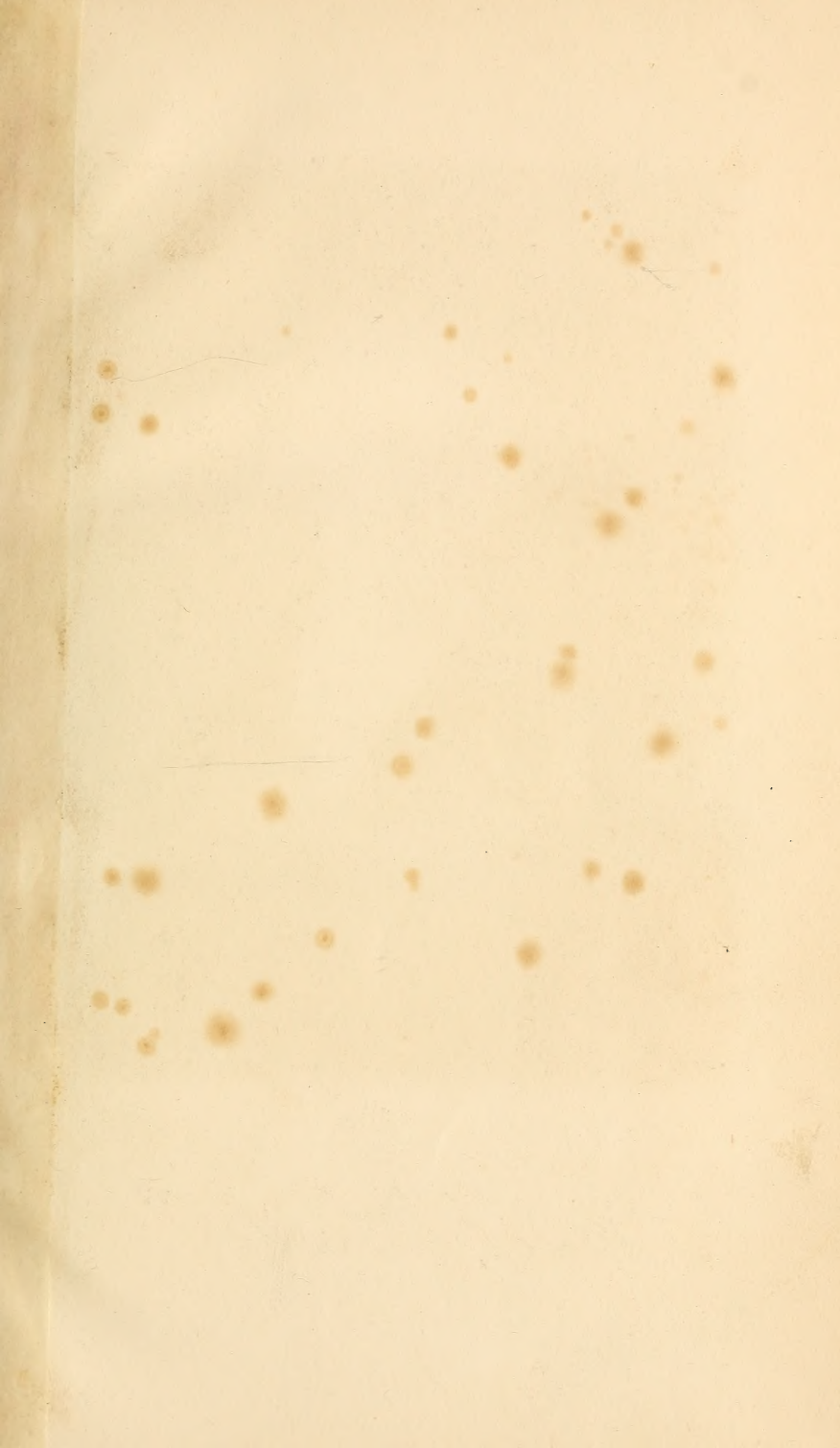
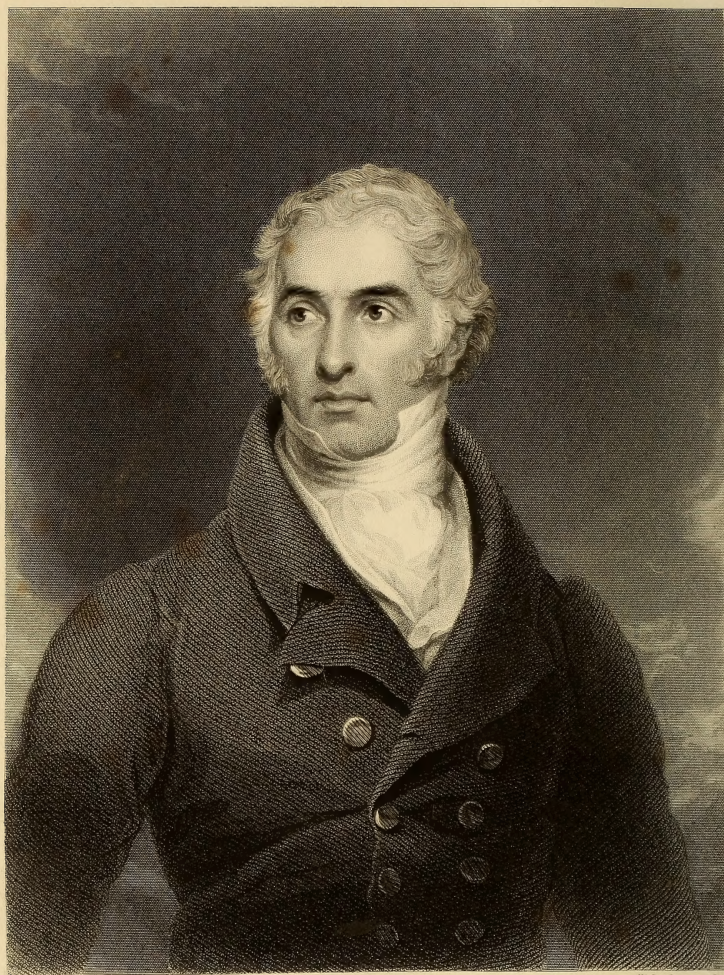




Class IIA 536

Book .S2S4





Woodman Sc.

Arch^d Th Saddler.

44

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER, Esq.

M.P. F.R.S. &c.

*By Request
Bentley*

PUBLISHED BY R. B. SEELEY AND W. BURNSIDE :
AND SOLD BY L. AND G. SEELEY,
FLEET STREET, LONDON.
MDCCCLXII.

DA 536
.S2 B4

PRINTED BY
L. AND G. SEELEY, THAMES DITTON, SURREY.

PREFACE.

THE present volume is offered to the public with mingled feelings of confidence and distrust: confidence, when considering the truth, and value, and extreme importance of the views advocated: distrust, when recollecting the peculiar disadvantages under which the work has been performed.

The purpose of attempting to furnish the public with some kind of a connected view of the plans and principles of Mr. Sadler, was formed immediately after his decease; that is, in the autumn of 1835. The lapse of so long a period as has since intervened, may naturally be held to deprive the writer of all excuse for inaccuracies, or other faults in the per-

formance; and to render him justly responsible for the production of a well-considered and carefully prepared work.

It is on this point that he wishes to offer a single remark. He desires to explain, that although more than six years have passed away since the purpose was formed, the time actually spent over the present volume has scarcely exceeded an equal number of months.

This has arisen from various causes, but mainly from the pressure of other literary duties, which seemed of a more urgent character. Very soon after the plan of the present work was formed, a duty of another but kindred description appeared to be cast upon the writer; and it was accordingly undertaken and discharged. At two subsequent periods the like again occurred. The reason for postponing the Memoir of Mr. Sadler in each case was the same,—that something like an urgent call of duty suggested itself, in the preparation of those works, which did not appear so clearly to exist, in point of *time*, in the case of this Memoir.

. It will be perceived that the writer has thus again and again shewn, in the strongest manner, his confidence in the great value and importance of the topics

discussed in the present work ; evincing repeatedly, his conviction, that the lapse of years would scarcely affect the worth of the book, or its just claim to popularity. He has still further exhibited this confidence, by permitting the work to incur the injury necessarily attendant on such an unusual and disadvantageous mode of composition.

No one accustomed to such a task, will undervalue the disadvantage of writing such a Memoir as the present by piecemeal ; composing a chapter—then laying it wholly aside—taking up a totally different subject, and not returning to the work for six or even nine months. Such has been the way in which the present volume has been formed ; and no one can be more sensible of the faults which must necessarily accompany such a mode of dealing with the subject, than is the writer.

It will necessarily, he apprehends, be often found that the same idea, and probably in the same words, is repeated again and again. Equally probable is it, that important points of an argument, supposed by him to have been premised, are no where to be seen. Such errors and misfortunes as these seem inherent in such a system of composition, except the author were able to retain all that he had written in his mind, or were

continually re-perusing the portions which had been completed.

It is needless, however, to dilate upon these circumstances. Deeply sensible of the many faults of the work, both in these and many other respects, the writer still reverts with hope to that which has encouraged him throughout his labour;—the solid, substantial, and all-important character of the truths contained in this history. It was a deep and thorough conviction of their weight and value, which first impelled him to the undertaking. Made still more aware than ever before, in the progress of the work, of his own deficiencies, he has also been more and more confirmed in his attachment to these truths. He believes them to be essentially and indissolubly connected with the well-being of the country; and in that belief he commends them to the calm consideration of all who feel an interest in her prosperity.

There is, however, one class, and that far from an unimportant one, at whose hands they will receive nothing of the kind. He alludes, of course, to a certain set of persons, who, with great activity and self-complacency, are accustomed on all occasions to present themselves to the public notice, as possessing an exclusive claim to the title of “Political Economists.”

By this entire body it was Mr. Sadler's fate to be constantly followed with misrepresentation, vehement abuse, and affected contempt. And their united efforts, though they could neither prevent the enactment of a Poor Law for Ireland, nor rescue the Malthusian theory from utter ruin; still effected at least this minor mischief, that they prevented the author of both these good works from receiving, in his lifetime, that meed of public gratitude which was his due. In the present instance, except in so far as the insignificance of the writer may protect him, a repetition of the same system of disingenuousness may be expected. For his own part, he anticipates it with the most entire equanimity. He humbly trusts that the volume now offered to the public owes its formation in a very small degree indeed to any motives personal to the writer. Simply wishing to follow in Mr. Sadler's footsteps, as an expounder of the great principles which it was the business of his life to enunciate, he is quite content—he should rather say, will be eminently happy, if he may, in any degree, share his fate; at least so far as to aid in producing beneficial results, without desiring or receiving any personal reward.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

A. D. 1780--1800.

	PAGE
PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH . . .	1

CHAPTER II.

A. D. 1800—1818.

EARLIER YEARS AT LEEDS	12
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

A. D. 1819—1826.

THE FORMATION OF HIS SYSTEM	32
---------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV.

A. D. 1827, 1828.

	PAGE
HIS WORK ON IRELAND	49

CHAPTER V.

A. D. 1829.

MR. SADLER'S ENTRANCE INTO PARLIAMENT, AND HIS SPEECHES ON THE CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL	91
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

A. D. 1829.

REMAINDER OF HIS FIRST SESSION IN PARLIAMENT	125
--	-----

CHAPTER VII.

THE VACATION OF 1829—MR. SADLER'S WORK ON POPULATION	150
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SESSION OF 1830—MOTION FOR A POOR LAW IN IRELAND—DISSOLUTION—NEW PARLIAMENT	200
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

	PAGE
THE SESSION OF 1830-31—THE REFORM BILL	221

CHAPTER X.

SECOND MOTION FOR A POOR LAW IN IRELAND— WITHDRAWMENT OF HIS MIND FROM POLITICS —MOTION ON THE STATE OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS	264
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

A. D. 1831—2.

THE CASE OF THE FACTORY CHILDREN	336
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEW POOR LAW OF 1834	412
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CORN LAWS	445
-------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CURRENCY	477
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

	PAGE
ON THE NATIONAL ECONOMY OF THE ISRAELITES	503

CHAPTER XVI.

CLOSE OF HIS LIFE—PERSONAL CHARACTER . . .	540
--	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

SUMMARY OF HIS SYSTEM	567
---------------------------------	-----

APPENDIX	623
--------------------	-----

MEMOIRS

ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A. D. 1780—1800.

PERIOD OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

THE history of the Life of Michael Thomas Sadler must be, in a great measure, a history of opinions, rather than of events. The chief circumstances of his career, viewed without reference to the workings of his ever-active mind, may soon be told. He was born at Snelston in Derbyshire, in the year 1780 : he continued to reside in that village and in the neighboring one of Doveridge, until the year 1800, when he removed to Leeds. In 1813 he entered into partnership with the widow of the late Samuel Fenton, Esq. of that place, whose eldest daughter he married in 1816. In March 1829 he was returned to Parliament as

one of the representatives for the borough of Newark; for which place he was re-elected in July, 1830. In May, 1831, Parliament having been again dissolved, he was returned for the borough of Aldborough in Yorkshire. His connection with Parliament terminating in December 1832, he removed about a year afterwards to Belfast in Ireland, where he continued to reside until his death, which occurred in July 1835, in the 56th year of his age.

He was the youngest son of Mr. James Sadler, who appears to have been, at the time of his birth, residing upon and cultivating a small estate in the adjoining parishes of Snelston and Doveridge in Derbyshire. By his will he bequeaths, "all my freehold and copyhold estate in Doveridge, to my son Joseph Sadler," "and all my freehold estate in Marston Montgomery, to my sons Benjamin and Michael Thomas Sadler."

Mr. James Sadler,—whom family tradition always described as a descendant of the celebrated Sir Ralph Sadler, of the sixteenth century,*—had married, in 1766, Frances, the daughter of the Rev. Michael Ferreebe, Rector of Rolleston

* The probabilities of this circumstance will be considered, at more length than would be expedient in this place, in note A. in the Appendix.

in Staffordshire. Mr. Ferreebe was the son of an eminent French Huguenot and refugee, who settled in London shortly after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and there acquired considerable property. Michael Ferreebe was entered at Christ Church, Oxford, where he greatly distinguished himself, and acquired the friendship of Swift and the chief literati of that day. His wife was a daughter of Henry Wrigley, Esq. of Langley Hall, near Middleton in Lancashire, whose family had resided on that property ever since the conquest. This estate was entailed on her daughter Frances, and thence to her children, the sons of Mr. James Sadler.

Mrs. Sadler appears to have united the polish of ancient gentility derived from one parent, with the intellectual attainments of the other. Her children have never ceased to regard her memory with the utmost affection and admiration; and we have heard many of those who were formerly her neighbours in Derbyshire, and who now survive her, use language of equal warmth in describing her character.

Mr. Sadler had by this marriage six children, of whom two died in their childhood. Of those who survived, Michael Thomas was the youngest. His birth took place at Snelston, on the 3rd of January, 1780.

His faculties seem to have developed themselves at an early age. A taste both for drawing and music, manifested itself before he had reached his fifth year. Specimens of early talent in sketching, made about this period of his childhood, have been preserved in the family ever since ; and at the same age, he was accustomed to find out a tune on the harpsichord, after having heard it played or sung, without the assistance of the printed notes.

About the sixth year of his age, he was placed under the care of Mr. Harrison, a school-master of considerable reputation at Doveridge, and with him he remained till his fourteenth or fifteenth year. Here he acquired a competent knowledge of Latin and Greek, a good acquaintance with French, and the rudiments of Italian and German. But Mr. Harrison's favourite pursuit was that of Mathematics, in which he greatly excelled, and to which he naturally directed the ardent mind of his pupil. By the time young Sadler had completed his eleventh year, he had gone through Saunderson's Algebra, calculated eclipses, found logarithms, and become conversant with the most abstruse problems in pure and practical geometry.

At this period he became a correspondent of the chief scientific periodical of that day ; answering most of the mathematical problems proposed

through that channel. Such indeed, was his proficiency, that at this early age, his tutor felt no hesitation in giving him the charge of a pupil of adult years, and who has since gained a distinguished reputation, but who was then passing the college vacations at Doveridge, for the benefit of Mr. Harrison's advice and direction.

At his twelfth year it was his father's intention to have removed him to a public school, with a view to his proceeding from thence to college. But on consulting Mr. Harrison, the tutor's fondness for his pupil caused him to use such persuasions, as induced Mr. Sadler to allow him to remain at Doveridge. Thus the whole plan and prospects of his life became deranged, and after remaining with Mr. Harrison till any longer stay appeared useless, he returned home, without any settled plan as to his further education or course of life.

Left now, for two or three years, very much to his own choice of pursuits, it happened fortunately, that his father possessed a large and well-selected library, which had been bequeathed to him by Mrs. Sadler's relative, the Rev. Henry Wrigley, Tutor of St. John's College, Cambridge. This collection contained all the standard English authors, together with the leading Greek and Roman classics; and as Michael had an insatiable thirst for reading, a year or two spent

with these companions, made him familiar with all the best models, both ancient and modern.

Leisure, and such a course of reading, soon produced one very common result, in a mind of an imaginative and enthusiastic order. He begun to indulge in a poetic vein to a considerable extent. He versified many of the Psalms, and produced a poem in Spenserian verse, descriptive of the scenery of the river Dove. He also threw into heroic verse the account of Darius's feast, given in 1 Esdras iv. This, with some other pieces, he at one time intended to send to the press; but discovering that Southey had anticipated him in the subject, he abandoned the intention.

We have not yet adverted to his religious views and impressions. Of these, in his earlier years, no distinct record has been preserved; but it is certain that the sedulous instructions of his pious and highly-gifted mother had not been without their effect. Shortly before this time, however, a circumstance had occurred in the history of Doveridge, which exercised a peculiar influence over the religious position of the whole of the family. This was, the appearance of the Wesleyan Methodists in that village.

With most intelligent persons, probably, the prejudice and hostility formerly awakened by the mention of this name has subsided. If any, how-

ever, should yet feel a rising disgust at the idea of contact with this despised body, we would endeavour to calm the feelings of such an one, by the philosophical reflections of an historian who will not be suspected of either enthusiasm or sectarianism.

“A hundred years ago, the churchman was slack in his duty, and slumbering at his post. It was the voice of an enthusiast that roused the sleeper. Truth must condemn alike the overstrained excitement of the one, and the untimely supineness of the other. But the progress of time, and still more—of mutual emulation, has corrected the defects of each. Sleep has never again fallen on the churchman ; enthusiasm has, in a great degree, departed from the methodist. So closely have the two persuasions drawn to each other, that they are now separated on no essential points, and by little more than the shadowy lines of prejudice and habit.” *

“The superstitions and excesses of the first Methodists cannot be concealed, with due regard to truth. But it is no less due to truth to acknowledge their high and eminent qualities. If to sacrifice every advantage, and to suffer every hardship ;—if to labour for the good, real or sup-

* Lord Mahon's History of England, Vol. ii. p. 391.

posed, of their fellow-creatures, with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their strength,—if the most fervent devotion,—if the most unconquerable energy be deserving of respect, let us not speak slightly of those spiritual leaders, who, mighty even in their errors, and honest even in their contradictions, have stamped their character on their own, and on the present times. It is proper to record, it is easy to deride, their frailties :—but let us, ere we condemn them, seriously ask ourselves, whether we should be equally ready to do and bear every thing in the cause of conscience,—whether, like them, we could fling away all thought of personal ease and personal advantage. It has often been said, that there is no virtue without sacrifices ; but surely it is equally true, that there are no sacrifices without virtue.” *

Mrs. Sadler, the daughter of a beneficed clergyman, a woman of taste, education, and refinement ; and now of mature age, was not likely to be captivated by mere rant and extravagance. Firmly attached, also, to the Church of England, and that from a reasonable and settled conviction, we must in justice concede that, in listening to the preachers who visited Doveridge, she had no

* Lord Mahon's History of England. Vol. ii. p. 362.

intention of forsaking the communion of the Establishment. Her case, doubtless, resembled that of thousands. Giving to religion the supremacy which is its right;—perceiving that if it deserves any place at all in the mind of a human being, it deserves the first;—acknowledging it to be, not wild enthusiasm, but sober reason, to be deeply and fervently in earnest about the things of eternity,—she probably found, in the vehemence and awakening zeal of the new visitants, something which touched her heart, while her reasoning faculties assented to its truth and value. She became a hearer of the Methodist preachers, without, however, throwing off her allegiance to the church, or discontinuing her attendance on its services; and her family followed with her. We have rather spoken of Mrs. Sadler in this case, than of her husband, because in the formation of the religious views of a youth, the influence of a pious, intelligent, and beloved mother, must always have much to do; and in the present instance this was unquestionably the case.

But the treatment of the Methodists in Dovedge, was too much like that which they met with in most other places. The vicious detested them for their faithful warnings, and their exhortations to purity of life. The pharasaical disliked them for their rigid requirement of a *heart-service*;

—and unfortunately, the incumbent of the parish considered them as troublesome intruders, denounced them from the pulpit, and countenanced the use of strong measures to diminish the number of their adherents.

Some idea of the inveteracy of feeling against the Methodists, may be gained from a trifling circumstance which occurred while Michael Sadler was yet at school. He was going, one day, from Doveridge to a town at a short distance, and his road lay across a bridge which was thrown over the Dove, at a spot where the water was very deep. At this spot he met one of the most profligate characters in the village, and who was, very naturally, among the foremost in the opposition to the Methodists. After a few words of abuse, this man seized hold of young Sadler, and suspending him over the parapet of the bridge, swore that he would instantly drop him into the water, if he did not forthwith *curse the Methodists*. “Never!” said the boy, “you may kill me if you choose, but I never will!” The wretch held him for several minutes, endeavoring to terrify him by threats and imprecations; but not succeeding, his fears of the consequences prevailed, and he released the youth. A neighbouring magistrate urged Mr. Sadler to prosecute the man, but before any resolve was taken, he had abruptly quitted the neighbourhood.

This occurrence took place when Michael was about twelve years of age. It was in his eighteenth year that he took a more public part in this quarrel, by publishing a small pamphlet in defence of the Methodists, against a public attack of the vicar from the pulpit. A merely local and passing discussion of this kind could have no interest for our readers, and we shall therefore make no extract from this production; merely remarking as we pass, that although it can prefer no claim to any distinguished rank as a controversial treatise, it is at least far beyond the powers of most youths of eighteen, however intelligent and well-educated.

It was not long after the publication of this tract, that a sudden attack of illness deprived him of his excellent mother;—a loss most deeply felt at the time, and to which even at a distance of thirty years, he could never recur without evident emotion. Mr. Sadler survived her but a short time; and neither of them had reached to what is commonly understood by the term of “old age.” A short time before Mr. Sadler’s death, he had fixed young Michael in business at Leeds, in connexion with and under the care of his elder brother, Mr. Benjamin Sadler. This event, and the breaking up of the family which immediately followed, brought to a close the first and probably the pleasantest portion of his life.

CHAPTER II.

A. D. 1800—1818.

EARLIER YEARS AT LEEDS.

WE are now to contemplate Mr. Sadler in his sudden removal from rural enjoyments and literary leisure, into the busy scenes of trade, and the turmoil of a large manufacturing town. He settled in Leeds in the year 1800, and remained a sharer in his brother's business for several years, until, about the year 1810, they jointly embraced the opportunity of entering into partnership with the widow of Mr. Samuel Fenton, an extensive importer of Irish linens in that town. With this concern, Mr. Sadler continued to be connected up to the period of his death.

In looking at Mr. Sadler as a man engaged in trade, the first reflection that suggests itself, is that of congratulation on his being associated with one in every respect better fitted than himself to conduct commercial affairs with accuracy and

success. In fact, the turn of his mind, the nature of his education, and the desultory habits of the later years of his youth, had so far unfitted him for that close and unremitting attention to business, which in these times of perpetual competition in all branches of trade, has become absolutely essential to success,—that it is difficult to imagine, how, without such friendly guidance and support, his course could have led to aught but disaster. Literature, and especially poetry, never lost its hold on his mind. Frequently he would become so absorbed in these pursuits as to forget all other affairs for days and even weeks together. Of these fits of abstraction various amusing anecdotes are told; which, however, it is scarcely necessary to offer to our readers. His devotions to the muse, nevertheless, were not of a sufficiently sustained character. He had the failing, a considerable but not an uncommon one, of leaving many things incomplete and unfinished, in the hope of a happier hour for adding the last touches. A habit, too, of writing down his thoughts on loose scraps of paper, and not always transferring them to a more permanent receptacle, necessarily occasioned the loss of many portions of his writings. Still our regrets need not exceed the limits of moderation on this score. He was enabled, in a later period of his life, to perform various labours of

such solid and substantial value, as to leave all poetic fame but that of the very first order, far behind,—and to that first order we cannot affect to believe that he would have reached. His chief work, an epic poem on the national subject of the deeds of *Alfred*, follows in its structure and versification, the great works of Pope and Dryden; and we know too well that of an hundred followers in this track, which the last hundred years have produced, not one, even of our greatest names, has achieved even moderate success in this path. We therefore leave “*Alfred*” in its unfinished state with no very poignant repinings,—well-pleased that that feeling of dissatisfaction with his own productions which genius can never wholly lose,—drove him from these pursuits, to labours of far higher value and more enduring utility.

But though we have been obliged to describe Mr. Sadler as very far from an exemplar in the conduct of his own commercial affairs, it is due to him to observe, that, when called into active exertion in the more varied field of public life, he never failed to shew himself possessed of talent, energy, and even great perseverance in labour. Not being here annoyed by the monotony of the counting-house, his powerful mind threw itself into every work of this kind which was presented to him, and never failed to place him in the fore-

most rank among the public men of his adopted town. And these labours were of the most varied character. He became a frequent contributor to the *Leeds Intelligencer*, the leading paper in the north of England, of the “blue,” or Tory party. He took the command of a company in the Leeds volunteers; and exhibited great skill in the high state of discipline to which he brought it. He became an active visitor of the sick and destitute poor, in connection with an institution called “the Stranger’s Friend Society.” He was for several years the superintendant of one of the largest Sunday Schools in Leeds, comprehending several hundred scholars. He also took a seat at the board for the management of the poor in that immense parish: and when the Treasurer of the Poor-rates left his post, Mr. Sadler undertook this arduous duty; and performed for several years a task, without remuneration, which, on his retirement, the parish thought deserving, in his successor, of an allowance of £150 a year. For this service he received the unanimous thanks of the town: but he considered himself chiefly recompensed by the full acquaintance which this office afforded him, with the habits, the wants, and the sufferings of the poor;—an acquaintance which was largely conducive to his subsequent and more important public services.

He also began about this time, to take a decided part in political affairs ; both generally, in support of the government on the great question of war with France ; and more especially, in the celebrated contest for the representation of the county of York which took place in 1807. In this unexampled struggle, Mr. Sadler's whole energies were devoted to the service of Mr. Wilberforce, and he was gratified in being enabled to render most efficient assistance in placing that gentleman at the head of the poll, with the immense number of 11,806 votes.

In 1812 and 1813, he first began to prove his powers as a public speaker. Two or three of his earliest attempts were reported in the *Leeds Intelligencer* of that period, and it may safely be asserted, that, looking at them as the spontaneous productions of a man who had spent his first twenty years in an obscure village, and the next ten in the din and bustle of a manufacturing town, they present the fullest promise of that harvest of fame and of usefulness, which, at a later period of his life, he was so rapidly to gather in.

In the year 1812, the country was anew disturbed by the agitation of what was called "The Catholic Question." For several preceding years, the subject had slumbered, and men's minds had ceased to be exercised upon it. The affairs of the

continent, and the approach of a powerful enemy to our own shores, necessarily drew the public attention in another direction. But as the more immediate peril, the energies and efforts of the French usurper, seemed to decline, and the contest was removed to a greater distance, room was left for the discussion of domestic controversies; and thus an internal danger returned upon us, less appalling to outward view, and less rapid in its advances, but hardly to be preferred by any reflecting lover of his country, even to the horrors of war, or the presence of an hostile invader.

On the revival of this question in Parliament, at the beginning of 1813, a public meeting was called by the mayor of Leeds, and held in the spacious chancel of the parish church, at which it was computed that nearly two thousand persons were present. The object of this meeting was to petition Parliament against the proposed concessions. Mr. Sadler's speech in seconding that petition seems to have been the chief feature of the day's proceedings. His reasonings must necessarily now appear of a familiar and every-day description; for the repeated discussions which have since taken place, have rendered the argument, on either side, "a thrice-told tale." But if we could abstract our thoughts from these later views of the question, and look at it as then presented, with a degree of

novelty, to the people of Leeds, we should probably admire both the selection of the topics, and the powers of expression manifested in the following passages from that speech :

“ In resisting what is most improperly, and I fear insidiously, denominated ‘ Catholic Emancipation,’ we stand completely aloof from all intention of interfering with that religious freedom, of which, in common with every individual in the British empire, his Majesty’s Roman Catholic subjects are already in the full possession and in the undisturbed exercise ;—an inestimable privilege, which, I cannot but remark, has never yet been extended by them, in the plenitude of their power, to those whom they stigmatize as ‘ heretics.’ And we are likewise absolved from the necessity of deliberating whether any, or what further portion of political power might be safely added to those many important civil privileges, already conceded to them by their best benefactor, our venerable Sovereign ; (with what effect I need not here declare :) for they most unequivocally assert, that nothing less than a total, and as it should appear, an unconditional surrender of those privileges still pertaining to the Protestant establishment, will be accepted by them. To meet the question, thus narrowed, we are assembled this day ; and under the full conviction, that a

nation, as much as an individual, has an undoubted right to chuse its own servants, or in other words, prescribe to whom its authority shall be delegated,—we conscientiously protest, in the terms of the petition just read, against their becoming our judges, our legislators, our ministers, our commanders, and in fine, perhaps ultimately our Sovereigns; and we are sanctioned by the united authority of reason, religion, and experience, in this our determination.

“ Sir, the Protestant cause has long been identified with that of the British nation. May they never be separated! But we are firmly convinced, that to concede to its grand adversary the power it seeks to recover, to resign that influence which it would infallibly exert, would be to dilapidate the venerable fabric of that happy constitution erected by the wisdom and cemented by the blood of our ancestors; would shake the very pillars on which the Protestant throne of these realms is founded; would invalidate the title of the present Protestant royal family; would threaten the existence of the Protestant establishment; would change many of our laws and subvert many of our sacred institutions; would extinguish the very spirit of the glorious revolution of 1688, and pour contempt on those great characters, who, under divine providence, brought about that happy event;

and in fine, would, in the present state of political parties, deliver up the country to Roman Catholic ascendancy.

“ But, Sir, had we no established government to advocate, no prescribed usages to defend : were we met here this day to deliberate on the formation of a free constitution for our country ; our opposition to popery as an ingredient of its government would remain unshaken. Does it need a proof, that popery is naturally adapted for the support of arbitrary power? Montesquieu himself, an authority of the highest order, admits the fact. We should likewise reject it, as a principle that saps the very foundation of political morality, by recognizing an authority that can dispense with the most sacred duties, and absolve the most solemn obligations ; as being hostile to every other profession of the Christian faith, and fraught with intolerance and exclusion. And, above all, as being dangerous to the interests of all Protestant governments, by yielding allegiance to a foreign power, which always acknowledges different interests from those of the nation, and often is found in open hostility to it. Hence the justly celebrated John Locke, the great champion of religious liberty, hesitates not, as has been previously remarked, to exclude it from his enlarged and extended system of toleration.

“ We are told, indeed, that its principles are

changed ; but its own councils, its colleges, its bishops, its advocates assures us to the contrary, and denounce those who so represent it, in language already quoted, as either deceived themselves or wishing to deceive others.

“ But, Sir, we are assured that if its principles remain unchangeable, its nature, at least, is regenerated by the influence of time. But a reference to the authorities previously alluded to, as well as to the speeches, publications, proceedings and conduct of its advocates at present, will, I fear, leave us few grounds to hope that this amelioration has taken place ; and will but too clearly indicate from their temper while in the act of petitioning, what their conduct would be when admitted into power.

“ Much stress has been laid this day on the circumstance of oaths, prescribed for the Roman Catholics, having been incorporated in the law of the land, and taken by many of that religious community. But we have likewise heard it proved, that multitudes of those to whom they were solemnly administered, during the late Irish rebellion, immediately falsified those engagements. And any one, if such there be, who doubts that the Romish Church still claims the power of absolving from these sacred obligations,—I would refer, not to remote or questionable authorities, nor

to the conduct of obscure and unauthorized individuals, but to a public act of the great Head of the Roman Catholic Church, the present pope ; who at the coronation of Buonaparte, at the altar of the church of Notre Dame in Paris, fully absolved Talleyrand from those many obligations of this nature, by which he had solemnly and voluntarily bound himself.

“In determining on all subjects of great national import, it clearly becomes us to avail ourselves of the sure guide of historic truth ; and on this point especially, we have indeed an awful but salutary lesson. Politically considered, when England roused herself to resist oppression and contend for freedom, did not this religion, as by a natural and indissoluble alliance, league itself with despotism ? Our national history since the Reformation, both before and after the Revolution, furnishes us, by a chain of striking events, with the most irrefragable and repeated proofs of its natural hostility to political freedom. But waving these considerations ; in a religious point of view, how does the subject darken upon us ! A system of spiritual tyranny, of priestly domination, destroying the native freedom of the soul, and freezing up its faculties—“ ’Tis dumb amaze and list’ning terror all ! ” But the gloom of its dreadful superstition has been indeed awfully illumined by the fires it kindled through-

out this land, in which expiring martyrs, writhing in agony, slowly yielded their souls to God in torturing flames. What myriads of human victims, more numerous than those of Moloch, rise in awful remembrance before us this day ! A noble army of martyrs which no man can number, from the foremost ranks of which I would summon forth the souls of our Cranmers, our Latimers, our Riddleys, our Hoopers ! let them pass as it were in awful review before us in this sacred place, and “ being dead, yet speak to us.” In our solemn decision this day, I trust we shall shew that we are not disobedient to their hallowed monitions. It is in vain our opponents assure us these days of persecution are for ever past. Without adverting to those massacres enumerated by a preceding speaker, we cannot forget, that in the sister island, when Popery recently identified itself with rebellion, the number of its victims, of every age and of both sexes, far exceeded those immolated at its shrine in the reign of her, justly denominated the Bloody Mary. “ We have heard with our ears and our fathers have declared unto us,” what will, I trust, unite all Protestants of every denomination in a bond of mutual defence, against an enemy that equally threatens the existence of them all.”

But the remaining passage of his speech best

exhibits both the penetrative power of Mr. Sadler's mind, in detecting the foundation-sophism on which the whole argument for "Emancipation" rested, and also the masculine grasp of his intellect, in the powerful exposure of its fallacy. It deserves perusal and consideration, not merely as a record of a past discussion, but as a valuable portion of a still existing and present controversy.

"But all the arguments suggested by reason or deduced from experience, the advocates of the measure to which we stand opposed attempt to rebut by a single proposition, which, if applied to religious freedom, none of us would feel disposed to controvert ; but which, when referred to political considerations, as in the present argument, is totally false. It is advanced, nevertheless, with all the air of a self-evident proposition ; with all the succinctness of an oracular response, and unfortunately with all the fallacy of one. It was originally broached by that arch-infidel, Thomas Paine, and is worthy of the source from whence it sprung. It is, that religion is no question, or in other words, ought not to be brought into question, between man and man : than which there was never a more false or more dangerous assertion. It might be true, to a certain extent, of the religion of the heathens, a chief part of which consisted in the private worship of their Penates ; or of such a religion as Laban's,

whose gods might be secreted in the bottom of a sack ; but of true Christianity it is totally false. All religion, indeed, in the widest sense, is the main and master-spring of human actions. It is the sole foundation of all human virtue, as well public as private. And hence our protestant ancestors, who knew the truth of their pure and reformed religion ; who saw, in a public point of view, its importance, and felt its necessity, made it an essential ingredient in the composition of that excellent form of government which they established, and bequeathed to us their posterity. But their authority is perhaps of little weight in these enlightened days ; those who still defer to it, are stigmatized as intolerant, and they are ridiculed as ‘ learned doctors of the sixteenth century,’ and by other opprobrious epithets. But we would call such sneerers to a recollection of their own insignificance. When has England, before or since, witnessed so glorious a period, so bright a display of all those powerful talents that adorn and elevate the human mind, as of those which mingled their coruscations at the time when these restrictions were imposed and established ? That Augustan age of England ! when her philosophers, her legislators, her poets, her divines, her literati, crowding together, formed as it were, a glorious galaxy on the firmament of fame, which will shine unrivalled while the page

of history endures. Men, to whom all others who wish to shine in their respective spheres, must “give their days and their nights,” must imbibe their wisdom, study their thoughts, imitate their expression, and catch, if they can, a ray of that genius with which they irradiated their own age, and illuminate all future generations. Men, compared with whom, the loftiest of those who call their authority into question, dwindle into less than dwarfs. Men, who gave their souls to these important considerations, who heard the very same arguments that are now pressed upon us in favour of the very same claims, and heard them from an authority to which less patriotic, less enlightened, less determined characters would have yielded implicit obedience,—but who heard them unmoved; and determined, as I hope we shall determine this day. I am well aware of the flimsy argument that is often urged, that these restrictions were only necessary while there was a popish pretender to the throne. But if the principle to which I have adverted be true, and which demands this notice, from the manner in which it is asserted and repeated,—that religion is no question between man and man,—why exclude a monarch from the throne of his ancestors on account of religion, (which we now hear is a thing not fairly cognizable by human authority,) for urging the very claims we now hear,

and attempting to introduce the order of things now sought to be established? In fact, the arguments founded on such fallacious principles as this, when fully stated and pressed to their ultimate issue, would involve us in a labyrinth of difficulties and dangers, from which no one, however strenuous for the measure, has as yet condescended to give us a clue of liberation. Admit the claims under consideration, and government, instead of that harmony we have hitherto deemed equally essential to its existence and to the success of its operations, would be a "chaos of contrarieties at war," in which, in the jar of contending interests, our present establishments would be threatened with total annihilation."

If compared with many later addresses on this topic, both parliamentary and on the hustings, this speech will claim no very high degree. But to view it fairly, it must be considered as one of the first public efforts of a young man, whose whole life had been spent in two country towns, and who was dealing with a subject then comparatively little understood. In this point of view it must be admitted to afford great promise for the future; and it is only as such, that we have here adverted to it.

The petition thus brought forward, against the Romish claims, was carried, in a very large meet-

ing, by an overwhelming majority, notwithstanding the vehement opposition of the whole Whig party of that town ; and was forwarded to parliament with an immense body of signatures.

In the autumn of 1814, Mr. Sadler experienced the first attack of that malady which, about twenty years afterwards, terminated his life. A distressing palpitation, and severe pain about the region of the heart, accompanied and followed by great prostration of strength, confined him for several weeks. On the recession of his complaint, he occupied much of the leisure time of his convalescence in his versification of the book of Psalms. This task gradually became so delightful to him, as to furnish, up to the very close of his life, a constant source of gratification and enjoyment. He had the Bible and prayer-book versions bound up together, and made them his constant companion. In his journeys, whether connected with the affairs of his firm, or taken with a view to relaxation, this little volume was ever at hand, and he had nearly completed, before his death, without ever taking up the work as a labour, an entirely new, and in many respects a very superior version of this portion of the Bible.

His marriage, in May 1816, to Miss Fenton, the eldest daughter of the lady with whom his brother and himself were connected in business, produced

the usual change and improvement in his habits ; which, though wholly free from vice, had been marked by a full share of the eccentricities of genius. He now became, in the largest sense of the word, a domestic man, mingling only with a small circle of friends, with whom he continued to be, as he had previously been to a larger range, a peculiar favourite.

He had always entertained a decided preference for the Church of England, but after his marriage he became more regular and undeviating in his attendance on her ordinances. And it was about this period that he accepted a seat in the Leeds corporation.

In the year 1817, Walter Fawkes, Esq. of Farnley, a gentleman who had for a short time represented the county of York in parliament, published a pamphlet, entitled ‘ The Englishman’s Manual, or a Dialogue between a Tory and a Reformer.’ In this tract, which quickly excited much attention, Mr. Fawkes endeavoured to prove that the British Constitution had been for ages suffering from the inroads of corruption, and the encroachments of arbitrary power. And, as the cry for ‘ Reform,’ which had been little heard of for the last twenty years, was again coming into fashion, and was beginning to be made the *cheval de bataille* of the various classes who were

opposed to the existing government, it naturally followed that Mr. Fawkes's production was, on its first appearance, greatly lauded, and represented as an unanswerable argument.

Perceiving this, and observing that a mere fiction was gaining credit, solely from being left in undisturbed possession of the field, Mr. Sadler took up the pen, and in the space of three weeks composed, and gave to the world a reply, consisting of 108 pages of rather close print, and filled with proofs of great research. Taking the directly opposite position, he asserted, and supported his assertions by the clearest proofs, that the progress of the Constitution had constantly been towards greater and still greater degrees of freedom, and an increasing proportion of democracy: that instead of encroaching upon the popular branch of the legislature, the crown had been constantly losing influence, and suffering positive diminution of power: and that at no former period were the people so fully and justly represented in the House of Commons, as at the existing moment. To those who know anything of the probabilities of sale attending a bulky political pamphlet, issued from a provincial town, and by an author of unknown name, it will be enough to say, that this work went through two considerable editions in a short period, to satisfy them that it must have

been no common production. It was entitled, ‘ *A First Letter to a Reformer,*’ and was intended to have been followed by a second. The reception it met with, might well have encouraged its author to proceed ; but finding that the tide suddenly turned against Mr. Fawkes, and that the chief Whig organ, the *Edinburgh Review*, treated his position as utterly untenable, Mr. Sadler ceased to regard the matter with any interest, and wrote no more on the subject.

CHAPTER III.

A. D. 1819—1826.

THE FORMATION OF HIS SYSTEM.

WE have now accompanied Mr. Sadler to that period of life, at which the human mind generally reaches maturity; at which, often after various fluctuations and corrections, men usually begin to feel well assured and grounded in their opinions; and having attained a degree of satisfaction and certainty which is the natural parent of confidence, they soon exhibit, if really in earnest in their views, a wish to enforce the truth and importance of the principles they have adopted, on the minds of others.

In the case of some, who are set apart for the office and dignity of statesmen and legislators, almost before their birth, such maturity is considerably hastened. But as with many other forced productions, this early forwardness has its disadvantages. The tree which is of slowest growth, is

both the most firmly rooted and the most compact and unyielding in its texture. The gourd may “grow up in a night, and perish in a night.” But the mighty denizens of the forest, as their duration is to outlast centuries, so they require almost centuries to attain maturity. Mr. Sadler had not completed his own education, as a legislator, up to the hour of his death; but even his “school exercises,” so to speak, in statesmanship, have more of real value in them, than all the splendid oratory of the Sheridans, the Cannings, and the Plunkets,—the eloquent advocates of a party, trained up from youth to argue on either side for place,—that the English language can produce.

It was between the date of his marriage and that of his entrance into Parliament, that the great outlines of his system, as we shall hereafter endeavour to delineate it, began to be distinctly marked.

That system cannot, it appears to us, be better described than as the *Paternal or Productive*; its leading characteristics being, to foster, protect, cherish, encourage, promote: its chief means of operation, the presenting to human beings the motives of benevolence and *hope*. The antagonist system, against which Mr. Sadler seemed raised up to wage endless war, is the system of the political economists, which may bear the name chosen and affixed to one of its leading features by its

chief apostle, and be characterized as the *Preventive or Repressive*: its object being to repress, discourage, isolate, and limit; and its favourite means, the inculcation of *fear*; and of mutual distrust. The motto of the one system is, “*Dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed* ;”—that of the other, “*At Nature’s mighty feast there is no vacant cover for you : she tells you to begone—you have no business to exist.*” *

It was the leading characteristic of Mr. Sadler’s mind, and that which elevated him above the mere party-politician of the day, that he never dealt with the bare externals of a question; never rested satisfied with arguments derived from present circumstances, or apparent expediency. His masculine understanding seemed unceasingly occupied with any question presented to him, until he had resolved it into its elementary principles, and fully satisfied his conscience as to the *right* and *wrong* of the matter.

He could not content himself with asking, in the words of Pontius Pilate, newly revived by would-be statesmen in the British legislature, “*What is truth?*” and then like Pilate, leaving the subject without caring for an answer. He knew full well that with a light from heaven, especially provided for our guidance, he who willingly re-

* Malthus.—*Essay on Population*, 4to. p. 552.

mained in darkness, would stumble to his own shame. And, with the immutable principles of truth deeply engraven on his conscience, and often recurred to in their Inspired Records, he never for an instant tolerated the idea of groping his way, like the blind, by the miserable aid of the nearest proximate circumstances.

This feature of his mind has especially forced itself on our notice, in perusing a number of his speeches; belonging, as they do, to a considerable series of years. Inferior, in several respects, to the best specimens of the great orators of our day, there is yet this vast advantage over most of these more favored leaders, constantly apparent,—that the speaker not only speaks from the heart, but that he *knows* also, by the force of moral demonstration on his own mind, that he speaks the truth, and is advocating right and justice. And this is made apparent by his constant appeal to first principles. The earliest of his speeches that we have upon record, already quoted in the preceding chapter, goes at once to the foundation of the whole question, and unhesitatingly asserts the difference between Protestantism and Popery to be no matter of doubtful merit, but one in which the *truth* was not only ascertainable, but actually ascertained, by the light of God's word. And in the last effort made by him

in the House of Commons, in 1832, he, with the same boldness, rests his case upon “ the law of God ;” which law he quotes, and upon which he fearlessly relies.

And here, doubtless, lay the secret of his strength. That which rendered him “ a bore ” to the mere gentleman of fashion, who cared little about politics, except in so far as it was necessary to profess some sort of opinions in order to gain the distinction of ‘ M.P.’; and made him utterly detestable to the sordid economist, who would willingly dispeople the land so that an equivalent quantity of steam-engines might but do the work at a cheaper rate ; was, his enthusiasm in every matter which he took in hand : and that enthusiasm could only exist as the natural consequence of a heartfelt conviction. But this earnestness in his work, the reality of which could not be mistaken, however unpopular it might make him with the mere loungeur, and with those official persons whose chief object always is, “ to carry on the government ” with as little trouble as may be, had a very different effect on the better portions of the people of England. Of this we shall find abundant proofs as we proceed. Our present object is, merely to mark the progress and settlement of his opinions, as they gradually became fixed, and were matured into a system.

In the year 1819, his attention was naturally directed, in common with the whole British public, to the question of the currency, then undergoing a close investigation, leading to an important practical change. The bent of his mind naturally led him to prefer that kind of currency which offered facilities to the enterprising and industrious ; rather than that seemed to vest all power in the great capitalist. But, seeing that some change was inevitable, his mind chiefly turned to the consideration of how that change might be effected with the least amount of suffering to the industrious classes.

His immense superiority in real practical knowledge and foresight was eminently manifested on this occasion. While Mr. Ricardo, the great oracle of the economists, and with him a crowd of supposed philosophers, were committing the gross absurdity of broadly predicting, that because gold was then only four and a half per cent above the mint price, *therefore*, the reduction in prices generally, arising from a return to a gold standard, would only be the same four and a half per cent,—Mr. Sadler saw with the greatest clearness and certainty, that the result would be a far more serious depression of prices, accompanied, of course, by the utmost distress, calamity, and in many cases, ruin. The result exhibited the difference between

an abstract theorist and a practical philosopher. Instead of the trivial and immaterial fall in prices predicted by the economists, the country speedily witnessed one of the most disastrous extent. In many cases, and for a time at least, the depression was to the extent of *one half*, or fifty per cent ; a much more fearful visitation, so far as the parties interested were concerned, than if the national debt had suddenly been doubled, or the taxation of the country raised from 50 to 100 millions per annum. Wheat, for instance, was in 1818, the year before the passing of the Currency bill, of the average price of 83*s.* 5*d.* per quarter. In 1822, three years after, it was 43*s.* 3*d.* Sugar was, in 1819, gazetted at the average of 50*s.* 9*d.*, in 1830 at 24*s.* 7*d.* Cheese, of the best sort, brought per cwt. £3 10*s.* to £5., in 1819; in 1830, £1. 15*s.* to £2. 15. Bacon in 1819, £3. 10*s.* to £3. 14*s.*: in 1830, only £1. 16*s.* to £2. Iron in bars, in 1819, £13. to £14. per ton; in 1830, £7. to £7. 5*s.* Lead, in 1819, £26, in 1830, £14. 10*s.* Coffee, in 1819, £6. 15*s.* to £8. 3*s.* per cwt; in 1830, £1. 5*s.* to £4. 4*s.* Cotton, in 1819, 1*s.* 3*d.* to 1*s.* 11*d.* per lb.; in 1830, 5*d.* to 8*d.* Flax, in 1819, £86. to £89. per ton; in 1830 £37. 10*s.* to £39. A variety of other leading commodities might be named, all evincing the same fact, that from 1819, when the currency bill passed, to 1830,

when it came into full effect, the reduction of prices on most commodities was nearly one half.

Now nothing can be clearer than that this vast change was one for the advantage of the capitalist and the mere consumer, and the disadvantage of the industrious producer. The man to whom the country pays £1000 a-year, whether in interest on the Three per cents, or as a placeman or pensioner, is clearly an immense gainer if the legislature chooses to pass a law to reduce by one half the prices of all things upon which his income is expended. His £1000 a-year thus becomes nearly equal to £2000. But with the poor *producer*, who has to grow twice as much corn, or raise twice as much iron, or make twice as much cheese, as heretofore, to pay the said annuitant his £1000 a-year, the case is widely different. And Mr. Sadler, clearly perceiving the operation of the change, felt no satisfaction in the progress of the currency bill.

Not, however, seeing how the measure could be successfully opposed, his chief desire was, to render the change less sudden ; and to prevent the ruin which he clearly foresaw that so immediate a revolution must bring on many innocent persons. This he proposed to do by a plan suggested in a series of letters to a periodical of that year, which was to this effect ;—To fix the resumption of cash payments at ten years' distance ; and, in the mean-

time, keeping up the ease and prosperity arising from a paper currency, to raise the sinking fund from five millions, its then limit, to ten ; which sum of ten millions should be actually devoted, each year, to the reduction of debt.

At the end of the ten years, by stopping this sinking fund, and cancelling all the debt purchased by it, to effect a sudden reduction of from ten to fifteen millions in the annual taxation, in those taxes which pressed most on the national industry ; and thus to give a great relief, on the one hand, at the same moment that the restriction of the currency came into operation on the other.

Of all the propositions then offered to the public on this much discussed but little understood topic, we feel no hesitation in asserting this of Mr. Sadler's to have been at once the most original and the best. It is, of course, useless now to waste regrets on the adoption of a harsher course ; but we may express the conviction which we feel,—that had some such precautions been resorted to, the ruin of hundreds or thousands of guiltless families might have been avoided ; and the country at large preserved from several fearful monetary convulsions.

In the same year, (1819) he took part in the foundation of a Literary and Philosophical Society in the town of Leeds ; of which institution

he soon became a Vice President. In 1825 he consented to prepare and read to the Society a series of papers, on the subject, selected by himself, of the principle of the Poor Laws. In these lectures we find the germ of his work on Ireland ; and many of its arguments and most striking passages. The choice of a subject so apparently unattractive marked the character of his mind. There was as little of human policy in it, and as much of earnestness in what he felt, and rightly felt, to be a subject of paramount importance, as marked his subsequent course in Parliament. As might have been expected, he opened the course with a very scanty auditory, but before he had reached his last lecture, the room was filled to overflowing.

A third proof of the progress of his mind in these inquiries, occurred in a speech delivered by him in the following year (1826) at a dinner given in Leeds to the Hon. W. Duncombe and R. Fountayne Wilson, Esq. the newly-elected members on the Protestant interest, for the West Riding of Yorkshire. The speech in question naturally touches on a great variety of topics ; but one passage exhibits the bent of his mind on those questions, which were thenceforward to constitute the chief occupation of his thoughts, during the few remaining years of his life.

“ My notions on political economy, I need not

distribute under the usual heads of capital, rent, wages, &c. but simply sum them up in these terms, namely :—To EXTEND THE UTMOST POSSIBLE DEGREE OF HUMAN HAPPINESS TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE NUMBER OF HUMAN BEINGS.* To do this, seems to me to require far less of art than of benevolence ; our duties are sufficiently plain, and fortunately for mankind, duty and interest are at length always found inseparably connected. In reference to a part of a former speech which has occasioned so much animadversion, I again assert, that the real interests of manufacture and agriculture are inseparable, and that those who would set them in hostile array against each other, are the true friends of neither. I regard agriculture as *une Manufacture universelle*, as Montesquieu somewhere expresses himself, and one without which no nation can ultimately prosper ; and which, as employing a far greater number of hands than any other occupation, this country, least of all others, could dispense with. I would therefore protect

* This principle has, of late years, been put forward as the object of a particular section of the school of Political Economists. Whether its *earliest* promulgation may be traced to their writings, or to Mr. Sadler, we are not able to say. Of one thing, however, we are abundantly certain, from personal intercourse with Mr. S. and enquiries directed to this point,—that it was not borrowed by him from a sect, whose writings, in fact, he never consulted.

and encourage it, as we have hitherto done all other manufactures, and I trust shall still continue to do, in spite of the new-fangled dogmas of the economists. I have been accused of adapting my doctrines to my audience, but I shall repeat, and with greater emphasis, surrounded by my mercantile friends and neighbours, what I said to (I am told) a different party at York. The proposition, which originated with Ricardo, of throwing out of cultivation the poorer soils, comprising the greater part of the surface of the kingdom, I hold to be one of the most cruel and absurd propositions which was ever submitted to the consideration of a thinking people. It is not because this would deform and desolate our beautiful country, and, smiling, as it is, with universal culture, like the garden of Eden, turn it back again into a barren and continuous common, that I object to it; neither is it because it would greatly diminish the value of the property of the country, at a period when such diminution would, I fear, be fatal; nor yet, because it would deprive thousands of the smaller freeholders of their all, without the remotest intention of indemnifying them. It is upon yet stronger and deeper grounds than all these that I object to it, namely, because it would throw millions upon millions of those who are now earning their bread by the sweat of their brow while

tilling those soils, out of employment and out of bread ; these must, I assert, then take refuge, one and all, amongst the manufacturing interests of the kingdom ; and, at a time when the markets of the world seem overstocked with our present supply, they must become our rivals, instead of remaining our best and steadiest customers. I am aware of what the theorists promise us as the ultimate result, but I hold their expectations to be very uncertain, and to be also, on many important considerations, very undesirable, if sure. I am not aware that it is possible to build one interest upon the ruins of another ; and if it were, its advantage would be but momentary. Like a rickety child, it might shew, indeed, some signs of precocity, but few evidences of strength, and no presages of perpetuity. With respect to the “ factious clamour for cheap prices,” (the expression is not mine, but I could apply with perfect truth, a still less flattering epithet to those who raise the cry, but Sir Francis Burdet has done it for me ;) it is not to serve the labouring poor, but to lower their present wages, “ that we may,” say the economists, “ compete with our foreign rivals ;” these, however, wish to conceal another and a still longer downward stride, which the country must take, before this competition can come into play ; they must not merely enable the people to feed as *cheaply*, but compel them to feed

as *poorly*, as those half-savage, half-civilized nations, with whom some are so eager for our artizans to compete, before their system can take effect : and what is this but to propose in plain terms, a vast and proportionate diminution in the circulation of all the products of industry in our own market. The great deterioration in the value of all property which would then necessarily ensue, coupled with the projected diminution of the circulating medium, would, I fear, at length create a difficulty of meeting the public creditor ; and England, which has found itself advancing for centuries past, under the ancient system, would then, as Shakespeare says, “ go like a crab, backwards,” till, under the guidance of our economists, we should at length arrive at perfection, and be “ subtilized into savages.”

“ What I have said in reference to the agricultural, I apply equally to the manufacturing interests. I would have them all duly fostered and protected, agreeably to the old English adage, Live and let live ! The linen manufacture, for instance, could not, especially in reference to its English branches, exist a moment without high protecting duties ; and what should I think of myself, if, enjoying this support, I should turn round upon an infinitely more numerous class of my fellow-countrymen, whose only hope is to earn their

bread, and head the clamour, aye, “clamour” against them: if, while I refused at all to compete with any but Englishmen, I should insist upon it that they competed with the whole world, old and new. But the error, I fear, would lie in my head as well as my heart while so doing. ’Tis true the new principle will work well in theory, as all theories do. I, however, greatly fear that the good it promises would be very uncertain and contingent, while the evil it would inflict would be sure and permanent. Had we to begin *de novo*, the case would be different, and a country like ours could have nothing to fear from an unrestrained commercial intercourse with every nation upon earth—then our course would be plain and straight forwards; but as we are at present circumstanced, I think we should be cautious in treading down those interests, which have grown up under a different system. Circumstanced as we are, especially in reference to the load of our public debt, I would as soon set a man to run a race with a millstone around his neck, as start England on the principle of this universal competition.

“In a word, Gentlemen, I am for an alteration of the corn laws, such as, on the one hand, will feed the people of this country at moderate prices, and on the other, will still permit the agriculturists of the empire to labour and to live amongst

us. I am for free trade also ! but it is principally the free trade of England that I would keep in view ; not that of foreigners of every country and description, that they may make free with any branch of it, in our own market, on the ‘ reciprocity ’ system ; which I fear, if I may still pun upon the word, will soon free us from trade altogether. Free trade, according to the new system, is, I fear, much like ‘ free living,’ dangerous to the purse, and destructive to the constitution. Under our present circumstances I feel persuaded that free trade, as applied either to the agricultural or shipping interests, would be ruinous,—that it would break from beneath us the staff which has supported, and paralyze the arm that has defended the nation, and wreathed her brow with unfading laurels. But under any such system, what are you to do with Ireland, which barely exists by an access to, and indeed a monopoly of, the English market, for the products of her industry ?—Why, leave them to the operation of Mr. M’Culloch’s system, which teaches the rich to serve the poor by deserting them ! Or commend them to the “ holy keeping ” of Mr. O’Connell, who can feed a starving population with scraps of politics, and above all, if he be allowed, could, it is said, satisfy them with plenteous doses of Catholic Emancipation. It is the comforts, the interests, the happi-

ness of the labouring poor, whether of England or Ireland, that I have kept in view during the whole of this discussion. How they are depressed and wronged by the modern system, and the methods by which their injuries ought to be redressed, have been long under my deepest consideration, and I am now about to submit my thoughts on that subject to the public, through another channel. Political economists propose to deprive them of their constitutional right to relief in their time of affliction and distress; and very consistently, for they would begin their operations by demolishing the pillars of support on which the great weight of the national charity rests,—the agricultural interests.”

CHAPTER IV.

A. D. 1827—1828.

HIS WORK ON IRELAND.

IN the passage quoted at the close of the last chapter, it will be observed that Mr. Sadler alluded to an intention he then entertained, of laying before the public his views of the state of Ireland, and of the policy required towards that country. The work thus adverted to was composed by him in the course of the following year, and made its appearance in the spring of 1828.

It had been his intention to include this Essay in the larger work, upon which he had been for some time engaged, on the Law of Human Increase; looking upon the sister kingdom as furnishing a most interesting and important section of the inquiry. But it will be in the recollection of those whose memories enable them to recal the chief features of that period, that a remarkable degree of excitement prevailed, with respect to the state of Ireland, during the two or three years preceding the passing of the Relief Bill; an excitement

which was in some degree aided by the various attempts of those who were opposed to that measure, and who therefore felt it the more incumbent on them to point out some other course by which the discontents of Ireland could be allayed. Hence arose sundry Committees of Enquiry, and various projects propounded, both in parliament and out of it, for grappling with the “evils” which afflicted Ireland, and for applying the true “remedy.”

The activity manifested in this matter by the political economists, and especially by the disciples of Mr. Malthus, and the perpetual repetition by them of the assertion, that “a redundant population” was the grand mischief under which Ireland laboured, and that emigration, or some other means of reducing the numbers of the people, must be adopted before peace and comfort could be restored, induced Mr. Sadler to abandon his first intention; and, detaching his chapters on the state of Ireland from his larger work,—to give them to the public in a distinct volume. The title-page of that volume expressly states, that it is intended as “a Refutation of the errors of the Emigration Committee, and others, touching that country.”

As Mr. Sadler’s parliamentary exertions connected with this question will cause us to return to the subject, we shall not discuss at much length

the character of this work. Some account, however, of its general tenor—and line of argument will naturally be looked for in this place.

The work opens with a reference to the prevailing errors and misconceptions, which it was the author's object to expose and to refute.

“Two dogmas they” (the Malthusians and the political economists) “have in common, as to the causes of the suffering and degradation of Ireland; and, at present, one specific cure. The former are these:—1. The distresses of Ireland are owing to a superfluous population, still increasing faster than the means of subsistence. 2. Those distresses are aggravated and multiplied by the universal use of the potatoe. The remedy is to be found in a diminished population. With regard to the former it is singular enough that, in one and the same breath, Providence is arraigned for bringing too many human beings into existence, and for affording sure means of sustentation to their increasing numbers, by a stupendous provision of nature, hitherto almost untouched rather than exhausted, and probably, in reference to any future population of the earth, inexhaustible. As it respects Ireland, millions upon millions of acres, now totally waste and idle, a little industry, directed and aided by what is called capital, would enrich with this subterraneous harvest, and

at the same time clothe with cattle “ a thousand ” of her barren “ hills,” so as to sustain and satisfy many millions of human beings more than are now often almost starved (ten times as many is the lowest calculation of our ablest agricultural authorities); but this natural expedient, equally dictated by humanity, policy, and necessity, does not chime in with the current notions. It is deemed more desirable to dissipate British capital in expatriating British subjects; in planting dubious friends, if not future enemies, in distant quarters, peopling the northern deserts of America, or the arid regions of Southern Africa, or even the continent and remote islands of the Southern Ocean, and thus, in a vast plurality of cases, terminating human misery, instead of relieving it. Such is the policy which is now beginning to be recommended from high places, even as it regards England: the very “ thews and sinews ” of the empire are to be transferred to distant climes, in order to increase our internal prosperity and strength! Regarding the latter, they may, indeed, differ a little at present; but, touching Ireland, the greatest unanimity prevails: Ireland must be depopulated to be enriched.”

He then gives a table, shewing the actual increase of the population between 1672 and 1821; and next proceeds to “ examine the arguments

of those who, holding the modern notion on the principle of population, attribute the distress and degradation of Ireland to excessive numbers ; and who exultingly point to that country, as fully demonstrating all the dogmas they have advanced. A very short consideration of the subject will, I think, suffice to abate the confidence of such, if not finally to destroy it altogether."

" I would first ask, then, is Ireland overpeopled in reference to its potential produce ?

" On the contrary, even on the showing of the Emigration Committee, there are in Ireland, at the present time, at least 4,900,000 acres of productive land uncultivated, independently of 2,416,664 acres deemed (on what authority I know not,) incapable of improvement. These immense tracts, a little of the constantly-abstracted capital of the country might bring into the most luxuriant state, as their cultivation should become necessary ; while the very act of reclaiming these would be the means of correcting the management of the rest, now imperfectly improved, so as to produce the means of human subsistence in quantities it would not be easy to calculate, certainly far beyond the possible consumption of double the present inhabitants of the entire island, (to take a far lower estimate than any which agriculture presents to us,) even were the people as much

improved in their mode of living as they would be increased in numbers. In the meantime, while Nature has provided the amplest means for this amelioration, and solicits from us their improvement, is she, or "human institutions," chargeable with the misery which their neglect occasions? Is the principle of our policy, or that of population, to blame as it respects Ireland? In a word, are these sufferings, under such circumstances, chargeable upon man, or upon God?

"But, to disencumber the question of all those calculations which a reference to the potential produce of the country involves, and of which political economy would avail itself, in order to "darken counsel" by obscure definitions and abstract discussions, neither intelligible nor interesting to the mass of mankind; let us, secondly, ask the advocates of the new theory of population, who, as before noticed, imagine they prove their point by a reference to Ireland,—Is Ireland, leaving totally out of consideration its possible fertility, overpeopled in reference to its actual produce?

"This, again, I must answer as before. Most certainly not; but very much to the contrary: and to this answer, and its necessary consequences, I must call the serious attention of the advocates of absenteeism, to whom I shall address myself more particularly hereafter. Ireland, in-

stead of not producing sufficient for the sustenance of its inhabitants, produces far more than they ever consume, exporting a greater quantity of its edible products than probably any other country of equal extent in the whole world. I had collected the annual returns of its exports of this nature for a series of years past, when, at the moment I was inserting them, a condensed statement of them, at a period particularly calculated to put the question to the severest test, met my eye. It is contained in a useful little work, entitled "Statistical Illustrations," in the emphatic language of whose author I shall present it.— "With an ignorance and pertinacity presumptuous as the expatiations and assertions adverted to above are fallacious and delusive," (alluding to some previous remarks on absenteeism) "it is asserted that the misery of Ireland arises from an excess of population beyond the power of the country to supply subsistence; but, in the face of such assertion, and whilst an appeal was being made in England to rescue Ireland from famine, and a subscription of 304,181*l.*, in 1822, was raised on that plea, 30,882*l.* only of which was expended for articles of subsistence, and 9,374*l.* more in potatoes for seed, the remainder being distributed in money," (much of which, doubtless, found its way into the pockets of the absentee

landlords,) “Ireland exported articles of subsistence alone, to no less an amount (at the very reduced value of that year) than 4,518,832*l.*; and in the three years, 1821, 1822, 1823, to the enormous amount of upwards of sixteen millions; whilst nearly the whole of the remaining exports, to the amount of upwards of ten millions more, in those three years, were composed of the products of the Irish soil.” Whether the immense quantity of cured provisions which Ireland supplies, in her own ports, to the royal navy, as well as the merchant shipping of this vast maritime empire, has to be added to these enormous amounts, I have not ascertained, nor is it necessary; the argument is abundantly triumphant either way.

“In the face, then, of such facts as these, the hardihood of attributing the misery of Ireland to a population redundant and excessive, in reference to the means of subsistence there produced, and of the appeal constantly made to that country in proof of the principle of population, as now explained, is certainly without parallel.

“No further proofs seem necessary upon a point absolutely incontrovertible; I therefore conclude, that if Ireland, at the present moment, only partially and imperfectly cultivated, far more than sustains its inhabitants, the appeal to that country in proof of the evil principle of population, which

multiplies mankind, faster than, and beyond the means of their subsistence, is at once disposed of, especially with those who regard human institutions as so light in the scale by which the individual shares are apportioned and distributed.

“ But, on so important a topic, practically speaking, as the population of Ireland, on which a fallacious principle, dictating a policy equally cruel and absurd, affects the welfare of millions of human beings, and even the existence of multitudes, a little prolixity stands in need of no excuse. I shall therefore attempt to demolish the very remains of an argument which, I think, has been already completely shaken. And this I shall do by shortly considering the proofs by which it pretends to be supported ; all of which a very little attention will disengage from the cause they are advanced to support, converting them, like all faithless auxiliaries, into its most formidable enemies.”

In advancing to the examination of these alleged proofs, Mr. Sadler observes, that “ as far as I have been able to gather the opinions of those who speak the most confidently as to an excessive population in Ireland, and are the loudest in demanding repressive measures in reference to it, they advance, in favour of their supposition, the following reasons :—

“ 1. The wretchedness and degradation of the people.

“ 2. Their want of employment.

“ 3. The frequent return of scarcities.

“ 4. The prevalence of epidemics.

“ These symptoms, indeed, we are instructed to believe, constitute everywhere the leading ones in the diagnosis of the inveterate, hereditary disease of the human family, a plethora of numbers; and clearly indicate the treatment required.”

He then demands, “ but what will become of these proofs, or rather of the argument they are meant to support, when it is seen that they existed to at least an equal degree, when, according to every possible view of the subject, Ireland suffered from a contrary extreme, namely, from a paucity of people? In shewing that such was the case, a vast body of evidence is at hand, sufficient, indeed, to swell this inquiry to ten times its present size. I shall, however, limit myself to one or two authorities on each point, and refer those who may be dissatisfied with them, to the entire history of that country, which is, unhappily, almost exclusively made up of them.

“ Commencing with the first period of the preceding table, viz. 1672, when the population was calculated at a little above a million, or, as since corrected, amounting to about 1,323,000,—none,

I think, will care to assert that Ireland was then, at any rate, overpeopled, either in reference to its fertility or the population of surrounding nations. With a soil of surpassing fertility, and only about forty individuals on a square mile, the idea of excessive numbers would have been a farce ; it was a farce, however, which never entered into any one's head in those days. But the wretchedness of the inhabitants was more conspicuous then, when there was not a fifth of their present number, than it is even at present. In proof of this, I appeal to the authority of one who had, probably, better means of forming an accurate judgment on the subject, and greater abilities in availing himself of them, than most of those numerous writers who have since adverted to it,—I mean Sir William Petty. For a description of the abject condition of the country at that period, I refer to his entire works, especially his “ Anatomy of Ireland,” where its situation is minutely described ; and in giving a few quotations from him, I cannot but remark, that the condition of the bulk of the inhabitants, to have made so strong an impression upon him, when that of the same class in all countries was so wretchedly inferior to what it is at present, must have been miserable in the extreme. The houses of the commonalty of a country are always amongst the most obvious

criteria of their condition, and these he thus describes : “ lamentable sties,” “ wretched cabins,” “ such as themselves could make in three or four days,” not worth five shillings the building,—the filth and stench of which he fully explains, and which may be imagined without quoting him. So that their habitations had not much improved since the time of Edmund Spencer, who calls them “ sties rather than houses, which were the chiefest cause of the farmer’s so beastly manner of life and savage condition, lying and living together with his beast, in one house, in one room, in one bed, that is, clean straw, or rather a foul dunghill.” But to return to Sir William : the proportion of such houses as these, if they may be so called, he thus gives : “ 160,000,” says he, “ out of the 200,000 houses of Ireland, are wretched cabins, without chimney, window, or door shut, even worse than those of the savages of America.” The Earl of Clarendon says, in describing them, that “ they cannot be called houses, but are perfect pigsties ; walls cast up and covered with straw and mud : and out of one of these huts, of about ten or twelve foot square, shall you see five or six men and women bolt out as you pass by, who stand staring about. If this be thus so near Dublin, (about twenty miles) what can it be farther up the country ! ”

“Their food at this period, it is hardly necessary to state, corresponded in wretchedness with their dwellings. We have it on the same authority, that it consisted of “cakes, whereof a penny serves a week for each ; potatoes from August till May : muscles, cockles, and oysters, near the sea : eggs and butter, made very rancid by keeping in bogs. As for flesh, they seldom eat it.” In a word, the “vice du pays,” to use an expression of Mr. Malthus’s old Swiss friend, then existed in full vigour : “they can content themselves,” says Petty, “with potatoes.”

“As to their clothing, we find it described by an authority already quoted. Lord Clarendon says, “it is sad to see the people, I mean the natives, such proper lusty fellows, poor, and almost naked.”

“Nearly half a century afterwards, when the population of Ireland, though increased, was still very thin, being, at the most, only seventy on the square mile, we learn that the wretchedness of the people was but little abated, its cause not having been removed. We still find them living miserably in their cabins, and many subsisting in a state of actual beggary. In the year 1718, the period of the fourth estimate of the population in the preceding table, Bishop Nicholson, writing to Archbishop Wake, describes the miserable condition of the people, even in the north of Ireland,

which he witnessed in proceeding to take possession of the See of Londonderry, to which he had been previously promoted. He notices that "they were pleased to grant him a guard of dragoons ; but," says he, "I saw no danger of losing the little money I had ; but was under some apprehension of being starved, having never beheld even in Picardy, Westphalia, or Scotland, such dismal marks of hunger and want as appeared in the countenances of the poor creatures that I met with on the road. The wretches lie in reeky sod-hovels ; and have generally no more than a rag or coarse blanket to cover a small part of their nakedness. Upon the strictest inquiry I could not find that they were better clad or lodged in the winter season. A ridge or two of potatoes is all the poor tenant has for the support of himself, a wife, and commonly ten or twelve bare-legged children." We shall see anon to what it was he attributed this wretchedness ; causes still in active operation, but which are very different from a "redundant population," and require other remedies than emigration. But to proceed with our proofs. A little while afterwards, Dobbs, a friend of Archbishop Boulter, and certainly the best versed in the general condition of Ireland of any man of his day, says, "our common people are very poorly clothed, go barelegged half the year,

and very rarely taste of that flesh-meat, with which we so much abound ; but are pinched in every article of life." I refer to Archbishop Boulter's letters for a full account of the distresses of the Irish people at this period ; and will content myself with a general description of them in the words of one more competent witness, Swift. " Whatever stranger took a journey amongst us," says he, " would be apt to think himself travelling in Lapland or Iceland, rather than a country so favoured by nature as ours, both in fruitfulness of soil and temperature of climate. The miserable dress, and diet, and dwelling of the people ; the general desolation in most parts of the kingdom ; the old seats of the nobility and gentry in ruins, and no new ones in their stead ; the families of the farmers, who pay great rents, living in filth and nastiness, upon butter-milk and potatoes, without a shoe or stocking to their feet, or a house so convenient as an English hog-sty to receive them : " these, he says, " are the comfortable sights which await an absentee, who may be induced to travel for once amongst them."

" The description may be brought down to a later period bye-and-bye ; in the mean time, I would ask, whether this state of things was then owing to redundant and excessive numbers, in relation to the means of subsistence which nature had provided ? "

Mr. S. next grapples with the evil of want of employment, and proceeds to shew that in Sir W. Petty's time, with a population of only 1,320,000,—that writer assures us that “the people of Ireland are not *one-fifth* employed,”—and that Dobbs, when the population was only 2,300,000, says, “our weavers are starving for want of employment.”

Proceeding to the circumstance of the frequent scarcities, which had been often adduced in proof of the redundancy of the population, Mr. Sadler shews, by the testimony of Mr. W. Petty in 1672, Archbishop Boulter in 1725, and Dr. Smith in 1740, that far greater visitations of famine had fallen upon the island at those periods, with a population of from 1,300,000 to 2,300,000,—than have been known in our own times, with the numbers of the people nearly quadrupled! And a similar course of investigation exhibits similar results, as to the prevalence of epidemic sicknesses and pestilential fevers. But having thus cleared away some of the fallacies with which the subject had been overlaid, Mr. Sadler advances a step “by inquiring, whether the alleged tendency in numbers to increase faster than food, is not false as it respects that country; or to the still greater confusion of such a position, whether there has not been, (not to speak of tendencies merely,

but facts,) an actual increase of food, far greater than that of the population, rapidly as, it must be confessed, it has accumulated? I shall, of course, limit my inquiries, in this stage of the argument, to the surplus quantities of food raised in different periods; that being the sole question in reference to the principle of population. In subsequently pursuing the subject, when accounting for the distresses which, nevertheless, exist in Ireland, I shall not imitate those who absolve human institutions, in order to lay the miseries of mankind at the door of their **Eternal Benefactor**.

“To anticipate an objection that may be made in reference to the nature of the general food of the country at present, about which so much is said, I mean the potatoe, let this suffice—the food of the native Irish was principally, if not exclusively, vegetable, long before the potatoe was known in Europe. Nay, in almost the first glimpses we have of them, they are represented to us as herbaceous, *ποηφάγοι*, for such is the expression of Solinus. So they continue to be described by Spenser, and Holingshed, and Camden: the latter says, “as for their meats, they feed willingly upon herbs and water-cresses, especially upon mushrooms, shamroots, and roots;” in which he is corroborated by Ware, the Irish antiquary, who wrote about the time when the ob-

noxious root was first introduced. The exchange, therefore, of the potatoe, which is all but bread in nutritiousness, and, as a sole article of food, greatly exceeding it in palatableness, and affording a vaster and far more certain supply, for the plants on which they before principally subsisted, is one of the many changes brought about by an enlarging population, which none, I think, can deny is of a most gratifying character.

“But not to annoy, unnecessarily, the opposers of population, by any further allusions to this root, let us confine our further inquiries to better fare. And, first, has the production of *corn* kept pace with the increase of the population? In answering this query, let the number of inhabitants, at each of the periods referred to, be still kept in recollection, and I think the selfish and cruel system will receive its death-blow, in the very scene where it meditates its triumph.

“In the seventeenth century, Ireland imported grain. We are informed, on indisputable authority, that “great provisions, both of meat and drink, went daily out of the kingdom into Ireland.” Coming down to a later period, “namely, a century ago, we shall find that grain, as well as other of the necessities of life, were imported in large quantities. The average amount of what Dobbs classes under the heads of imports for

meat and drink, and materials for drinking, (including medicine,) was £344,550, annually. Some exports of grain of different kinds, he notices, there then were, but not such as by any means to balance the imports. This sum was on the average of eight years, ending 1726, and consequently exclusive of the years of scarcity previously alluded to, when we are informed there were to the amount of from £100,000 to £200,000, in grain only, brought in. But to present the amount of these imports in ordinary years, and to contrast them with the exports of Ireland, at the period of the last census, 1821, and accompanying the statement with the number of inhabitants at each period, the following are the important facts :—

IRELAND.	
CORN IMPORTED, On an average of 6 years, ending 1725.	CORN EXPORTED, in 1821.
Population, 2,300,000; or, 71 on a square mile.	Population, 6,801,827; or, 211 on a square mile.
Wheat 27,048	Wheat 1,038,937
Barley and Malt . . . 7,255	Oats 959,474
Hulled ditto 677	Barley 78,588
Flour 4,083	Meal (Wheat) . . . 252,010
39,063	Oatmeal 37,156
Total value of im- ports at prices of } £78,126 1821.	Total value of } exports. } £2,366,165

“ Here, then, we see demonstrated the important political problem, whether population has a natural tendency to increase faster than food, or otherwise. When Ireland, in 1725, only numbered seventy-one inhabitants on a square mile, she *imported* grain, in ordinary times, to the amount of twenty or thirty thousand quarters annually; but when her population, on the same space, became trebled, she not only (of necessity) subsisted that number, and certainly not worse than at the former period, but actually *exported* a surplus of much above a million quarters !

“ Should it be said that Ireland was, in the former period, a grazing country, in consequence of the impediments which landlords threw in the way of tillage, on whose impolicy and cruelty Archbishop Boulter dwells very feelingly in many of his letters, till the evil was at length partly remedied by a legislative interference, the consequence of which was a vast increase of the products in question ; I shall not argue this point, but betake myself to the produce of the pasturage of the country, (which, of course, must have been proportionably checked,) in order to discover whether there is a tendency in population to exceed even these means of human subsistence, which confessedly take the largest proportion of surface, and the best soils to produce them. This

second inquiry I shall determine in precisely the same manner as before. Ireland certainly exported cattle, and very largely, at the former period; they constituted the bulk of her returns: has, then, the vast augmentation in the population, since that time, diminished, or rather annihilated, that export, and “absorbed” (to use the favourite word of the day) the surplus produce of the country, as it regards this species of human food? The following facts will best answer that query:—

IRELAND.	
Value of the Produce of Cattle and Sheep exported on the average of Eight Years, ending 1726.	Value of the Produce of Cattle and Sheep exported in 1821.
Population, 2,300,000, or 71 on each Square Mile.	Population, 6,801,827, or 211 on each Square Mile.
Total average value, £623,177.	Total value, £3,705,993.

“The argument might be minutely pursued through the intervening period, but it is unnecessary; it is singular enough, however, to observe, that midway between these two dates (1777), the population having considerably advanced, there was nearly a balance between the imports and exports of grain, or, in other words, Ireland about grew its own bread. Since, then, the population has rather more than doubled, how

has the constant tendency which our theorists perpetually assert been manifested? By sextupling the agricultural produce.

“With such facts as the preceding tables exhibit, recorded in the statistical annals of the empire, and which are, and long have been, published to the world, certainly the fatuity, not to say mendacity, of these constant appeals to Ireland in proof that population naturally multiplies more rapidly than the means of subsistence, is without parallel. I challenge any one to add any thing in the way of illustration to the broad and glaring absurdity which such a principle exhibits, as applied to Ireland. Let our political economists concede to a plain man of ordinary capacity that sound judgment in human affairs, which Archbishop Tillotson claims for such an one, even on the more mysterious truths of religion—a judgment which, whether they concede it to him or not, he most certainly possesses; and let him be told the foregoing facts regarding Ireland:—that, a century ago, the population, then being but a little more than two millions, could not supply itself with grain; but that now, with its inhabitants trebled, it is not only enabled so to do, but to export at least ten millions of bushels, as well as six times the amount in cattle, (perhaps about thrice as many head,) as at the former period;—

and could he be brought to understand and believe that population there had advanced more rapidly than food ; or that, if things were suffered to go on thus, universal distress and ruin must inevitably ensue,—in a word, that the principle of human increase operates in that island as an evil ? And what would it avail, were it told him that the cultivators were, in the mean time, faring most wretchedly themselves, and actually suffering for want of sufficient support. He would instantly rejoin, why then do they not retain some part of these immense exports, to satisfy their own necessities ? And, if he were an English cultivator, he would be the readier to recommend such a measure. But, that he must, in compliment to the principle of population, see present suffering and future starvation awaiting a people, merely on the score of increasing numbers, while he is shown that such increase has actually produced a far larger measure of superfluous provision, which has to find a vent elsewhere, in quantities which actually inundate other markets, would be rather too much to demand from a man of common sense. Place such a man on the committee, and he would think about preventing the undue emigration of corn, and cattle, and pigs, rather than of promoting that of the people.”

These extracts will give some idea of the power of reasoning and extent of practical knowledge exhibited in this most original and masterly work; and the style in which the fallacies of the economists are trampled under foot, and, in fact, utterly annihilated, will sufficiently account for the bitterness always manifested towards Mr. S. by the whole of that flippant and self-conceited body.

Having thus cleared for himself a fair field, Mr. S. next proceeds to consider the expedients most commonly proposed, and to propound his own views, but as it is impossible for us to furnish, with any justice to the author, a syllabus of the whole work, within any space which might reasonably be allotted to it, we shall merely state that he discusses, successively, the proposed expedients of Emigration,—Clearing,—The Preventive Check,—and Ecclesiastical Confiscation, and shews them, each and all, to be either impracticable or delusive, or both. He then opens his own view, which

1. Shews that the grand evil which afflicts Ireland is, the absence of a National Provision for the necessitous Poor;—and naturally recommends an immediate removal of this fatal deficiency.

- 2ndly. Alleges, that these evils are much increased by the prevalence of Absenteeism, and therefore counsels a sedulous discouragement of

this practice, and a consequent encouragement to Residence : and

3dly. Since Ireland is and must long be, an almost exclusively agricultural country, counsels an “effectual protection” to this branch of industry, by “a system of efficient corn-laws.”

These subjects occupy the chief part of the work. Towards the close of the discussion Mr. Sadler makes this animated and powerful appeal to the economists ;—

“Presenting, therefore, the foregoing calculations and results, not as conjectures, but as incontrovertible facts ; not as accidents, but as the sure and constant effects of adequate causes ; I ask those who are proposing to thin Ireland by clearances, dispersions, or emigrations, or by whatsoever methods, whether they will still venture to proceed ? It is clearly true, in respect to Ireland, as I shall show it to be of all other countries to whose statistics I have been enabled to appeal, that to lessen the population at any particular time, or in any given district, by whatever means, would, agreeably to an irreversible and benevolent law of nature, be the certain means of simultaneously increasing the prolificness of the remainder, and that, without “room being made” for an increased number of marriages, as some, who have not examined into this singular, but

universal fact, ignorantly suppose. And seeing, moreover, that, even in Ireland, as well as every where else, the distress is the greatest, and ever has been, at those periods and in those parts where the people are the fewest; and that larger numbers there, also, are but other terms for a greater measure of prosperity; on what imaginable foundation do our theorists rest their anti-national propositions? Presuming them ignorant of some of the foregoing truths, still, as the expedients to which they would resort, in order to cure Ireland, have been tried over and over again, ages ago, and have invariably aggravated the evils they proposed to eradicate, why are they still persisted in, at the expense of injuring one branch of the empire, and outraging the feelings of the rest? Supposing they could reduce Ulster to the "level" of Connaught, in point of population, and Connaught to that of Sutherlandshire, *cui bono*? I repeat the question: Is the distribution of the population of Ireland, taken in connexion with their condition, such as to sanction their views and arguments, or to contradict and silence them for ever? Even in Ireland, wretched and impoverished as she is, where is it that the inhabitants make the closest approaches to a state of happiness and prosperity, or, in a word, obtain the nearest to a fair share in the comforts which

the empire at large administers to its people? Where, but in Ulster, in which, I repeat, there are 407 inhabitants on the Irish mile? Where is it that the wretchedness is the most conspicuous, and seems to be the most hopeless? In Connaught, where there are only 263, or about twenty acres to every family! and where, by the bye, we are told, on indubitable authority, that the distress was at least as great as at present, when there were twenty acres to each individual! What is it that makes the difference? I answer, in the words of one who wrote much upon the subject, and to good purpose, had he been attended to,—“numbers of men!” And yet these economists would, had they it in their power, create, what they are perpetually raving about, “a vacuum!” God, however has decided for a *plenum*; and the inspired voice of nature and reason, as well as of revelation, proclaims his command, “Multiply—*replenish* the earth; and subdue it:” and the experience of thousands of years has taught the world, and ought to have instructed such, that this is the only certain road to national prosperity, as well as individual happiness.”

And then, after a rapid exhibition of the true principle of human increase,—which subject we postpone to a future chapter, Mr. Sadler thus closes his work:

“Ireland, therefore, I must repeat, is no exception to the true principle of human increase ; a principle which, no more than the one that it opposes, can ever remain inert, and like that, may be “known by its fruits.” It dictates to the feelings, and prompts the exertions of all who receive it. Demonstrably true, even with respect to Ireland, it holds forth the most instructive lesson as it regards that country. It teaches those who have to do with its affairs, or who wish to dictate to and intermeddle with those that have, a far surer, as well as happier method of serving and blessing that country, than either transporting the people, driving them from their farms, deserting them in their distresses, or diminishing their numbers, by any plans of cruelty or oppression, ancient or modern. It proves the utter futility of all such attempts, the law of nature being universal ; the same as it respects the Irish, and, indeed, all other people, as it was with the Israelites, who, “the more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew ;” and that the way of diminishing the fecundity of the Irish is not by the creation of vacuums, but by replenishing those already made, by the deserters and enemies of their country. As this true principle of human increase is understood, and prevails, feelings of confidence in an all-sufficient Providence will be

strengthened, and of cordial affection for our fellow-creatures revived ; and benevolence, no longer paralyzed by the influences of the contrary theory, will renew its wonted exertions in behalf of human beings, in the ways which God and nature have heretofore dictated and blessed. Even policy itself may at length be pleased to think, that what it never can, and nature perpetually does, regulate, may so be regulated for the best ; and, laying aside its dread of population, concede, at length, that to do justly, and love mercy, is the best and safest course for nations, as well as individuals ; and that the surest way to preserve a people in peace and quietness, is to give them a permanent interest in the institutions of their country.

“ Instead, therefore, of adopting the measures now proposed, and recommended, indeed, a century ago, let us pursue a more natural, humane, and patriotic course. In the mean time let us speak less, and legislate not at all, against those poor labourers, who, being deprived of the work and bread that ought to belong to them in their own country, naturally pursue them to this ; and who meritoriously take the proceeds of their hard earnings to their own domestic hearths,—a conduct that combines the very opposites of all the vices with which they are perpetually charged.

Irish vagrants ! Who are the real, culpable vagrants, ye imperial legislators, about whom ye ought to bestir yourselves ?

“ Surely, Ireland is the last of all countries upon earth that ought to permit its people to starve from want of food, or suffer for want of employment. As to the former, its surplus produce, even now, is probably greater than that of any other country in the world of equal extent ; and its surface might, on the very lowest calculations which our practical agriculturists have ever made, sustain in plenty far above ten times the number of inhabitants that it now nearly starves ; while “ the wastes of the sea,” to repeat Lord Bacon’s expression, by which it is encircled, remain almost totally untouched. Demand for labour is, however, wanted, in order to accomplish any amelioration in the country ; and that can never be obtained while the means of its remuneration are withdrawn, as well as the necessity for it destroyed, to so great an extent, by absenteeism,—inflicting all those wrongs which have been the painful subject of consideration in the former pages of this publication. It is this grand evil, and the want of a national provision for the poor, which it renders the more necessary, to which much of the distress and turbulence of Ireland has been distinctly traced. Surely that country

presents a noble field for the exertions of the real patriot ; there he might build himself an everlasting monument : the imperishable materials are at hand. Its natural capacities are unrivalled ; so are those of its people ; though both lie uncultured, abandoned, abused ! In the character of its inhabitants there are the elements of whatever is elevated and noble ; these, however borne down and hidden, are indicated wherever their development is not rendered impossible. Their courage in the field needs no panegyric of mine, and has never been surpassed ; their charity, notwithstanding their poverty, never equalled ; even while I am thus writing, I will dare to assert, that, in many a cabin of that country, the god-like act of our immortal Alfred, which will be transmitted down to the remotest generations, the dividing his last meal with the beggar, is this instant being repeated. And their gratitude for kindnesses received, equals the ready warmth with which they are ever conferred. In the domestic sphere, according to their humble means, they are unrivalled in fidelity and affection. I mean not to contend that they have not faults, and grievous ones ; but these are mainly attributable to the condition to which they have been reduced, and the manner in which they have been so long treated. They perhaps, *mirabile dictu*, feel no strong affection for

those of their superiors, whom they rarely see, or see only to be insulted,—but whom they are perpetually feeding ; nor attachment to a government which they identify with their oppressors. But let them be treated as, it is confessed and declared on all hands, they ought to be : let their natural patrons and protectors return to them, not “ for a short time,” as exactors and “ drivers,” but, permanently, as kind and resident landlords ; let labour be fostered and encouraged ; let want be relieved, and life itself preserved, by a moderated system of poor-laws, which shall concede those humble claims to all, which God and Nature have immutably established, and which policy itself has long sanctioned : in a word, let the different ranks resume their equally essential stations, each performing their several duties ; and the social edifice, thus “ compact together and at unity in itself,” shall never again be shaken. These are the means, simple and obvious, though deprecated by inveterate selfishness, and ridiculed by theoretic folly, which would, and in no long time, renovate Ireland, and repay the wrongs of many generations ; which would waken a nation into gladness, and spread a smile over the face of nature itself. The benevolence of the great would then be reflected in the thankful and gratified demeanour of their inferiors. The mutual pleasure of giving and

receiving favours would fill the cup of human happiness, agitate and heighten its pleasures, even to the very brim. The various and too often discordant elements of society would become purified of their inherent evils by this salutary admixture. Its several classes, weak in their division, and hostile as separated from each other, would, as they were drawn closer together in the bonds of mutual interest and affection, become indissoluble: not only, as the faded bundle of sticks, would they remain united and unbroken, but each, like the rod of Aaron, would again branch forth and blossom into all the charities and virtues of domestic and social life. Then, indeed, the different ranks of society, instead of so many steps of a dungeon, descending down to lower and still lower depths of misery and degradation, would, like Jacob's ladder, seem reaching up to Heaven, and the Angels of Mercy and Gratitude would be seen ascending and descending thereon, for ever!"

With the reception given to his work by competent judges, Mr. Sadler had every reason to be satisfied. Its sale was, for a work of this description, on a topic most wearisome to the popular mind, and opposed in its views to the reigning doctrines and hypotheses of the day, very considerable; the first edition being quickly taken off,

and a new one demanded. In Parliament, too, and in the leading public journals, its value was at once acknowledged. "This work," said the *Quarterly Review*, "deserves to be generally and attentively read. The author has brought together a body of facts, and discusses, with great clearness and ability, principles of extreme importance." * "I quote this work," said Lord Darnley in the House of Peers, "as an authority on which I rely."† "Few dissent," said Lord Oxmantown, in the House of Commons, "from the theories it contains, more than I do; but all must pay a just tribute to the industry, zeal, and ability, so eminently conspicuous in every part of it."‡ "The book on Ireland written by the honorable member for Newark," said Mr. Grattan, "contains more valuable information respecting the state of that country, than all the Reports that have ever been laid on the table of this House."||

These testimonies may be allowed to possess some value, since they are given by men whose general line of politics differed greatly from Mr. Sadler's. But the most solid and substantial proof of the value of his work is furnished by the effects which have visibly followed its publication. We are aware, indeed, that in this, as in many

* *Quar. Rev.* Vol. 38. p. 53. † *Mirror of Parl.* May 1. 1828.

‡ *Ibid.* June 2. 1829.

|| *Ibid.* Nov. 11. 1830.

other cases, the connection between cause and effect has been little remarked ; nor, without some degree of attentive consideration, could we expect men to trace back a gradual and almost imperceptible, though nearly total, change in the public mind, through a course of several years ; and to detect the latent, but real spring of that great alteration. But if that consideration be given to the subject, there can be no doubt or hesitation as to the fact, that a revulsion or change, of a nearly total degree, has taken place in the public mind within the last ten years, on this question ; and that no adequate cause can be assigned for that great alteration, except the appearance of Mr. Sadler's work. Those who dislike to admit this mode of accounting for a change so rapid and so extensive, may point out, if they can, any other sufficient cause ; or may repose, if they prefer it, in the belief, that this mental revolution took place without any assignable cause whatever.

Many, however, may hesitate to admit the fact, at least to the extent in which we have stated it, —that an entire change has taken place of late years, in the public mind, on this subject. They may look around on the political world, and finding all parties nearly unanimous, as to the necessity of a Poor Law for Ireland, may be ready to say, that, as far as they can remember, there

never was any other opinion—at least expressed in any strength, or to any extent; although practical measures have only recently been matured and brought before the legislature. To such persons we should recommend a retrospective glance over the debates in Parliament, and the principal political and literary journals, from the close of the war, down to the appearance of Mr. Sadler's volume. We will furnish a few specimens, which have fallen under our own observation, and which will at least shew that a very different state of the public mind from that which now exists, was apparent during the period to which we have just adverted.

To begin with the year 1820,—we find the *Edinburgh Review* of that date, so far from dreaming of a Poor Law for Ireland, boldly, and without hesitation prescribing the complete abolition of all Poor Laws, even in England itself! The passage is as follows;—

“There are two points which we consider as now admitted by *all men of sense*; first, that the Poor Laws *must be abolished*;—second; that they must be very gradually abolished. We hardly think it worth while to throw away pen and ink upon any one who is inclined to dispute *either* of these propositions.” *

* *Edinburgh Review*. Vol. XXXIII. p. 95.

About two years after, in 1822, (July 25) we observe the *Times* newspaper expressing its fear, that the introduction of the Poor Laws into the sister country, was “a remedy little applicable to the state of Ireland. There is not one man in twenty throughout the south of Ireland,”—it was added,—“who, under such a system, would not come upon his parish for relief.”

Passing onwards to 1825, we find the *Edinburgh Review* again alluding to the subject, with a more immediate reference to Ireland. It says:—“The majority of our readers will, we apprehend, hardly conceive it *possible* that any one could, at this time of day, have seriously proposed the introduction of the English Poor Law system into Ireland, as a means of arresting the spread of pauperism.” “If we were really desirous of immediately consummating *the ruin of Ireland* by instantly destroying the little capital she is possessed of, and of eradicating whatever of prudence and consideration may be found in any class of her inhabitants, we could do nothing better than adopt the scheme in question.” *

Such were the views of the leading Whig periodical: and those of its only rival in North Britain,—*Blackwood's Magazine*,—were too nearly akin. In the preceding year, (1824) that maga-

* *Edinburgh Review*. Jan. 1825.

zine had indulged to a considerable extent in similar fancies ; not indeed denouncing the Poor Laws, but advocating the mischievous fallacy that a “redundant population” was among the chief evils which afflicted Ireland ; and of course, urging the common remedy of emigration.

“There exists, indeed, one evil, or as I would rather call it, obstruction to national prosperity ; for which, during the present general debasement of the popular mind, it seems altogether hopeless,—and for which, under any condition of the people, it will be very difficult, to find an adequate remedy. No person acquainted with this country will be at a loss to know, that I allude to its *great and overgrowing population*.” *

“That there is a *great redundancy* of population, and that it cannot be effectually acted upon by the capabilities of Ireland, seems to be unquestionable ; but we cannot agree with those who appear to think that this redundancy is an evil not to be overcome. We have immense territories which need peopling ; and we think no principle can be more clear than this, that if the population be redundant in one part of the empire, it is the duty of government, if it possess the means, to remove the excess to such other parts as need inhabitants.” †

* *Blackwood's Magazine*. Vol. XV. p. 13. † *Ibid.* p. 279.

And in the same year, (1825) on the 22nd of March, a debate arose in the House of Commons on a proposition tending to the gradual introduction of a Poor Law, when no less a person than Sir James Mackintosh delivered himself in the following decided terms ;—

“ He had only one observation to make on this question. It was his deliberate opinion, that the Poor Laws was *the only curse* which had not been introduced into Ireland ; and he earnestly trusted that the House would not consent to *inflict* it upon that country, after the experience it had had of their *lamentable* consequences in England.”

In the next year, (1826) this topic came incidentally before the House of Lords ; when, (on Feb. 15,) the Earl of Limerick “ rose to express his *astonishment* that any individual could *stir* a subject fraught with such *mischievous consequences* as a proposition for introducing Poor Laws into Ireland. It had been said by somebody that Ireland was used to Acts of Forfeiture, but he could assure their lordships, that the introduction of the Poor Laws would be a *general forfeiture of all property whatsoever*.”

In 1827, on the ninth of March, a few words passed in the House of Commons ; when Sir N. Colthurst declared his opinion that “ the introduction of Poor Laws into Ireland would be a *most dan-*

gerous experiment." And Mr. George Dawson said "that he would omit no opportunity of raising his voice against them."

In the next year, (April 1, 1828,) the subject was again alluded to in the House of Commons, when Sir J. Newport "was conscientiously convinced that if one thing more than another would *rapidly tend to the destruction of Ireland*, it would be the adoption there of the Poor Laws of England. It would be productive of the greatest possible evils. He should deprecate it as *the most dreadful visitation.*"

And Mr. Peel "saw reasons enough to convince him that the introduction of the Poor Laws would ultimately be *productive of great evils in Ireland*, even if the machinery could be provided to carry them into effect. . . . He felt so strongly all the evils that would be produced, that he *could hardly conceive any event* that would induce him to consent to such a proposition."

Such was the popular view of the question, when Mr. Sadler's work appeared. It opposed itself at once, and without the least reserve, to the general current, which, up to that moment, ran in a decidedly *contra* direction. Its weight and importance were at once admitted, as we have already seen, by various competent, and by no means *partial* judges. Its first effect upon

the public mind was, to put an immediate end to those vehement objurgations of the proposition which had just before been so common. The leaders of the public mind, who had but lately been bold and decided in their tone, first became silent; and after a decent lapse of time, began to deal with the question in a totally different spirit. But it will belong to a subsequent chapter to remark the successive steps in these conversions. At present we shall content ourselves with observing, that up to the year 1828, every attempt to introduce the subject to the notice of Parliament, was received with mingled astonishment and indignation;—astonishment at its folly, and indignation at its wickedness;—and yet, at the end of ten short years, in the session of 1838, we observe a Poor Law for Ireland rapidly passing through Parliament by majorities of *ten to one*; and the only enquiry is, why the Government had not brought it forward several years earlier! Upon a recent occasion on which the bill was discussed in the House of Commons, one of the most prominent of its opposers (Mr. Shiel,) broke into a wondering lamentation at the extraordinary change he had witnessed within seven short years. He said;—“ I cannot help expressing my surprize, when I reflect that, a very short time since, all the leading men in the House, of all parties, were opposed

to the introduction of any Poor Law into Ireland ; and now they appear, all at once, anxious to plunge us into extremities from which there will be no retreat.”*

A more expressive, though involuntary, tribute, to the power and efficacy of Mr. Sadler’s work, could not possibly have been offered.

* *Mirror of Parl.* June 2. 1837.

CHAPTER V.

A. D. 1829.

MR. SADLER'S ENTRANCE INTO PARLIAMENT, AND HIS
SPEECHES ON THE CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL.

WE have now accompanied Mr. Sadler to the threshold of his public career. He had long been known and appreciated in the neighbourhood in which his lot had been cast, and his recent publication had brought him, in one capacity at least, into more general notice. One or two further and concurring incidents sufficed to draw him forth from a merely provincial sphere, and to place him before the nation in the light of a public character. His life had been, for thirty years, chiefly spent in the acquisition of that kind of knowledge which befits a statesman; he was now to try his powers in another and more difficult line,—namely, in the application and public inculcation of the knowledge he had acquired, and the principles he had ascertained to be true. Of the probability

of his success in this path, some of his friends, and those among his warmest admirers, entertained a degree of doubt. The possession of great talents, extensive knowledge, and the soundest principles, does not always complete the character of one who is competent to lead and to influence the minds of others. Many, it is true, we have, who exhibit much skill in displaying to the best advantage their slender stock of knowledge ; but we have also a few who know far more than they can, with any degree of success, impart to others. Mr. Sadler, assuredly, belonged to the latter class. Not that he failed to attract considerable attention as a speaker, during his short parliamentary career ; but that the rank he took in the House of Commons, and his acceptability among its members, seldom bore any proportion to his just pretensions. He was, in fact, weighed down and hampered with the abundance of his intellectual stores. A wise man once said, that “ if he had his hand full of truths, he would open but one finger at a time.” And this maxim ought to be especially borne in mind by any one desirous of entering on an useful parliamentary career. That assembly, pressed with a constant load of business, and necessarily always full of haste and impatience, will seldom listen to *dissertations*, except from a very few favorites of established reputation. The begin-

ner must confine himself to the rapid sketch, the terse observation, the happy application, the point well made out, and the whole glanced over with a rail-road rapidity. But this was not Mr. Sadler's style. Full of matter on almost every subject of real interest, he felt a constant difficulty in compressing his arguments, so as to render them sufficiently superficial and popular for that assembly. And thus it was that while the eight or ten speeches of length, delivered by him during the four years of his parliamentary career, defy all comparison with any others of the same period, for extent of knowledge, depth of argument, and justness of view, yet the speaker himself cannot be said, in the common acceptation of the term, to have been eminently successful as a parliamentary orator. The rising of Mr. Burke in that House is reported to have been usually the signal for a general adjournment to dinner : and although nothing equally strong can with truth be averred of Mr. Sadler—who always had an auditory, and often an attentive one ; yet it is certain that every one of his efforts in Parliament was far more justly appreciated by the country at large, than by those who had the advantage of listening to it.

But it is time that we adverted to the circumstances which led to Mr. Sadler's entrance into Parliament. As it was no object of his ambition

or his desire, it is probable, that he would have closed his life as he began it, in the limited circle of a provincial town, had not some extraordinary circumstance called him forth. That circumstance was, the determination taken, by the Cabinet of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, in February, 1829, to adopt as their own, the measure commonly called CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

This event, probably the most momentous, by far, that modern history has had to record, cannot be passed over without a few observations. It was, indeed, described by its advocates as a mere act of justice, conducting us, in all probability, to no very remarkable results ;—the bare removal of a blot from the statute-book, leading to greater harmony and contentment among the people, but nothing more. But these representations were as deceptive as all the other prophecies proceeding from the same quarter : such as,—that the whole army heretofore maintained in Ireland might be disbanded on the passing of this act,—that it “ would render the church in Ireland as secure as the church in Yorkshire ; ”—and sundry other anticipations, equally flattering and equally false. We have now seen, but too plainly, the real nature of the step then taken,—a step which, instead of terminating all strife and contention, as its advocates promised, has proved but the commencement

of a long series of struggles and of changes, the final end or real extent of which it is impossible for any one yet to prognosticate. One thing, however, is sufficiently clear, namely, that a *principle* was then for the first time introduced into the British Constitution, which has subsequently shaken that Constitution to its very foundations ; a principle which is evidently not one of peace, but of contention ; not of harmony, but disorganization.

The year 1828, which immediately preceded that in which the fatal step was taken, was marked by the appearance of divers “premonitory symptoms” of the approaching evil. Among these, one of the most remarkable was, that of the simultaneous desertion of the Protestant ranks, or at least the public declaration of their adhesion to the “Emancipation” party,—of several persons of some standing and consideration in the political world. One of these occurrences contributed, in an unforeseen way, to call Mr. Sadler into public life.

The Pitt Club of Leeds held its usual anniversary Festival on the 28th of May, 1828. The most remarkable event of the evening, was the appearance of the learned recorder of that town at the meeting, for the purpose of enforcing upon the members the inconsistency of which he judged many of them to be guilty, in denominating

themselves “Pittites,” and yet opposing that line of policy with reference to Ireland, of which Mr. Pitt, during the latter years of his life, had been the constant advocate. Most men would have protested against this inconsistency, if they deemed it such, by absenting themselves from the meeting: the gentleman in question took the more straightforward and manly course, of explaining his views to his political friends and associates, and of endeavouring to convince them of their error.

There was, however, an obvious answer to this sort of reasoning. A deep admiration of Mr. Pitt’s talents, and of his self-devotion to his country’s cause; and a sentiment of gratitude to God, who had raised up such a leader in the councils of Britain, in the hour of her greatest need,—was not at all inconsistent with a recollection, that this same leader was *human*, and therefore liable to err. Nor could the opinions of Mr. Pitt in 1801, under the peculiar circumstances of that day, be a just and infallible rule for the guidance of his followers in 1828, amidst an entirely altered state of things.

These and other considerations of a similar character, were adduced by Mr. Sadler, who rose immediately after the Recorder, and in a speech of great eloquence and power, addressed himself to the arguments brought forward by that gen-

tleman. Mr. Sadler's reply was received with the strongest marks of enthusiastic approbation by the members present ; and very quickly found its way into the press, not only in Yorkshire, but in the metropolis also. The symptoms of defec-tion in various quarters, unhappily, were not to be denied ; but it was satisfactory to perceive that able and zealous champions were still to be found to uplift the Protestant standard, and to do battle manfully in its defence.

The lapse of a few months brought on the opening of the Session of 1829, when the fears which had been entertained by many, for several months past, were fully realized, by the declarations of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, of the determination to which they had come, to endeavor to put an end to this most perplexing of all questions.

It is impossible, at the present moment, to look back on that eventful period without being filled with astonishment. How came the question to be yielded just at that very moment when, to all human appearance, the chances of its success had diminished to the lowest ebb ? Not while France threatened our very existence, and union and harmony at home seemed therefore so essential as to be worth almost any sacrifice ; nor yet at a later period, when Castlereagh and Canning, both de-

terminated advocates of “emancipation,” led the forces of administration in the House of Commons;—not then was this concession granted. It was reserved for a moment when the whole machine of government was in the hands of men who had abandoned office and power only a few months before, rather than take part in an administration which, they feared, would be likely to favor these very claims! To such a cabinet was it left, enjoying, too, the full possession of undisturbed power, and a freedom from all probability of molestation, which enabled it to choose its own course with perfect freedom,—to a cabinet led in the one house by a man in whose character firmness and imperturbability seemed to be the leading features; and in the other by the acknowledged champion of the Protestant cause,—to such a ministry was it left to accomplish, seemingly in the most improbable moment and by the most unlikely means, that “breaking in upon the British constitution,” to effect which the statesmanship of Pitt and Grenville, and the eloquence of Canning and of Grattan, had so long essayed in vain.

The strangeness of these circumstances seems scarcely susceptible of augmentation. Yet a moment’s reflection on the personal character of the two chief agents in the work, does seem to increase, if it be possible, the causes of wonder.

In the one house we see a leader who had been raised to a peculiar eminence by the trust and confidence reposed in him by the people, as to this very point. We see him, too, especially punctilious as to his own personal honour, and priding himself, almost to fastidiousness, on the purity and consistency of his character as a public man. And yet this is the individual who comes forward, of his own free will, and unconstrained by circumstances, voluntarily to demolish his own long-cherished fame, and to place his name on record, for all future ages, as a singular example of political recreancy ; remarkable especially for this, that of all the conversions upon record there is no one resembling this, either in its rapidity, or in the apparent want of internal reason, or of external motive.

The other, and probably the chief actor in this lamentable work, furnishes still greater cause for astonishment. The most remarkable quality of this extraordinary mind, seems to be, the rapidity and precision with which, in every matter placed before it, the leading point is instantly singled out. Penetration and depth of foresight probably scarcely ever existed to such a degree in any other human mind. And in the next place may be named, that power of intellect which discerns with equal readiness, the necessities and the remedies of

every case. These qualities of mind, continually exercising themselves, without effort and without ostentation, have gradually so augmented the senatorial reputation of him who, a dozen years back, was looked upon as "a mere soldier," that there is some ground to apprehend, should his life be prolonged to any extent, the rise of a species of idolatry among the people ; or at least the establishment of a sort of mental despotism, in which the conqueror of the world shall be elevated, involuntarily on his own part, to the dictator's chair, by the voice of a people by whom no other mode of tyranny would be for a moment tolerated.

Yet it was this impersonation of wisdom and foresight that committed the prodigious act of folly known by the name of "The Roman Catholic Relief Bill !" And it was this clear and far-seeing mind, as to dangers and the modes of avoiding them, that perpetrated the drivellings called "securities," thereunto attached ! And are we to behold wisdom thus turned into folly ; caution into rashness ; and a studious regard for character and reputation, into an utter recklessness of both, without acknowledging the visible working of that hand "*that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish ?*" (Isa. xliv. 25.)

Nor is it difficult to imagine a merciful and benevolent motive at work, even in the troubles

and difficulties which this act of folly has brought upon us. For no kind of atmosphere, physical, mental, or political, is a state of long calm and stagnation healthful. Storms have their office of mercy, as well as peaceful showers. The winds that scatter the pride and beauty of the forest, force, at the same time, the roots of its mighty denizens more deeply into the earth, and thus strengthen, while they only seem to strip them of their verdure. Nor are we left to general surmisings, even as to the benefits derived from the political hurricanes of the last ten years. The act of 1829, intended by its framers as a *settlement*, has rather proved an *unsettlement* of every institution of the state. But out of the interminable strife and agitation which has followed, the nation has already derived extensive advantage. The purification of much which had gathered rust and corruption, and the removal of many things whose retention was by no means defensible, is already a matter of just rejoicing. We may properly condemn and dislike the agitators; knowing their motives to be vile, and their acts worthy of execration; and yet look up with thankfulness to Him who “*maketh the wrath of man to praise him; while the remainder of wrath he doth restrain.*”

Nor would it be just to heap any very vehement or peculiar condemnation on the chief agents

in the great change of 1829. We have already remarked the extraordinary fact, that on that occasion their own peculiar and characteristic qualities seemed to be supernaturally eclipsed, or even exchanged for the exactly opposite failings;—regard to consistency of character, for a recklessness of all honorable fame;—clear-sightedness and forethought, for absolute blindness to inevitable results; and the like. But having fairly taken this into the account, we ought further to admit, that the concession of 1829, was, to the parties so obscured, nothing but an almost inevitable result of the system commenced by Lord Liverpool more than twenty years before.

We allude to the “open-question” system: a course of action which as naturally tended to bring on the catastrophe of 1829, as the toleration or connivance granted to any vice, in public or in private life, is, to foster and mature that vice into the full maturity of unblushing and boastful crime.

In re-forming his Cabinet after the death of Mr. Perceval, Lord Liverpool seemed to have said to himself;—“*Talent* I must have, at all events. Sound principle I will also endeavor to secure in the *next* place; if it is conveniently to be obtained.”

Whereas the only wise and safe course lay in reversing these two considerations, and saying, “*Sound principle* I must have, at all events; and

if it is accompanied by brilliant talents, so much the better."

The great essential matters, truth and honesty, were unhappily made mere subordinates or accessories in his system. Genius and skill were preferred to qualities of more enduring worth. Essentials and non-essentials thus changed places, to the fatal injury of the entire system.

Lord Liverpool was a man of the highest personal integrity; and, except in his blind partiality to the follies of "political economy,"—of correct views. But his mind was not formed for command. Circumstances, with him, often possessed an undue weight and influence. Instead of moulding events and men according to his own determinations, he seemed to take all kinds of successive impressions, from the ruling character or circumstance of the hour. And never did statesman introduce into politics a principle fraught with greater weakness and folly, than that of the "open question" policy.

This policy was doubtless adopted, in the first instance, under the idea that it involved no concession on either side:—That two parties, fully agreeing on most subjects of national interest, but differing on some one question, might very rationally consent to place that one question in abeyance, under a mutual compact of tolerance and individual freedom.

Any such supposition, however, was founded on an erroneous view of the relative position of the contracting parties. Such a treaty always supposes the existence, in the first place, of a ruling mind, occupying the station of premier, by whom such terms of union are settled and agreed to. And that premier, it must be assumed, has his own view of the matter in question. Nor are we imagining the topic in question to be one of trifling importance ; or such a compact, deliberately made and publicly announced, would never have been thought requisite.

A premier, then, having, as a man fitted for such a station must be presumed to have, a clear view and a decided opinion on the subject in dispute ; and that subject being one of great public importance, is desirous of the co-operation of an individual in some department of his ministry, whose opinion, on that subject, is at variance with his own. What is to be done, with reference to the point of difference ? The accustomed and only rational course, is, for the individual in question to consider whether that point is of sufficient magnitude in his eyes, and whether his convictions with reference to it are sufficiently rooted and fixed, to constitute an insurmountable obstacle to his acceptance of office. Supposing him to feel a doubt on either of these points, and to arrive

at the conclusion that he can do more good by surrendering his personal opinion on this one matter, and co-operating zealously on all others, than by standing aloof; he may then with a clear conscience give in his adhesion. If not, then the question is, or ought to be, at an end.

Lord Liverpool, however, thought otherwise. The pressure of a temporary emergency, probably caused the relative importance of the more permanent question of Protestant ascendancy to hold too subordinate a place in his mind. He, therefore, as Premier, accepted the services of some distinguished men, without exacting from them an adherence to his own policy on this question. He, probably, hardly perceived, that the concession on their part, in so consenting to act, was almost nothing; while the yielding on his, was of the greatest possible moment. To be permitted as individuals, to support their own views of the question at issue, was the utmost that the parties in question could demand. To prescribe the policy of the Cabinet clearly was not theirs;—to assent and to maintain their own independent course of action was the utmost that they could claim. That utmost they obtained. On the other hand, the premier, to whom it of right belonged to decide the policy of his Cabinet, did, most unquestionably, by consenting to form a neutralized

and divided ministry, on this point, submit to a vast concession. He conceded, in fact, as subsequent events proved, the ultimate success of the very question that he feared. And, as far as the present moment was concerned, he conceded *this*, which of itself was of the greatest importance to the question,—that he was willing to let it be seen by the whole country, that there were public men opposed to him in this matter, who, with office in view, yet refused to concede to him ; and who, on the other hand, could compel *him* to concede to them.

And this is the main point to be kept in view, in every such compromise. The Premier who contents himself with an arrangement of this kind ; permitting some of his subordinates both to speak and to act in opposition to that course of policy, which he in his conscience believes to be essentially right ; will always be considered by the public at large to have confessed, either that he is not quite clear as to the justness of his own views, or that at least he does not hold the point to be of any vital importance. A drawn battle of this kind is, to the individual who ought to rule, more than half a defeat. In the case of which we are now treating, this was conspicuously seen. The Whigs, or Liberal party, were unanimous in their advocacy of “ Emancipation.” But those who, in all

other respects, contended for the Constitution of 1688, were, owing to Lord Liverpool's want of firmness, divided upon this. The ultimate result, if this state of things were permitted to continue, could not be doubtful. The very fact, of a division in the conservative camp, gave double energy to the assailing party ; while it filled the defenders with a fearful consciousness, that a position, *so* defended, could not, for any long period of time, be successfully maintained.

A mind possessed of energy and decision, could not patiently contemplate a continuance in this position. Had Lord Liverpool been equal to the exigency, he would gladly have seized the opportunity afforded by the death of Lord Londonderry, and the acceptance of the Indian government by Mr. Canning, to re-form his Cabinet on a purely Protestant basis. Had this been done, and had Sir Robert Peel, with three or four able supporters, been employed to construct the administrative machine in the lower House on these principles ; the dissolution of 1826, with the question fairly and frankly stated to the country, and the legitimate influence of government employed to enforce its own views, would have given a majority of probably a hundred votes against concession, and would have decided the question for at least half a century. The ulterior consequences need only be

alluded to. Avoiding the disunion of the Tory party, we should of course have also avoided the wreck of the Duke of Wellington's ministry in 1830; the irruption of the Whigs and all their desperate struggles and expedients to retain power, from the Reform Bill of 1831, to the appropriation clause of 1835;—every one of which has been dishonestly proposed, as arising, not from any sincere belief in its intrinsic justice, or national expediency, but as a mere contrivance to gain popularity and maintain possession of office.

Lord Liverpool, however, whether from mental insufficiency, or from incipient disease, shrank from adopting this decisive line of conduct. Although the danger hourly increased, and the mischiefs of the “open question” system became more and more apparent, he still persevered in, and in fact augmented the evil, by assigning a more prominent part to the chief advocate of the Romanists in the lower house. A rapid succession of changes followed, which ended in placing the helm of state in the hands of one, of whom it might very safely be predicated, that no system of imbecility and compromise could long be suffered to exist in a government over which he consented to preside.

That the “open question” system, should be abandoned by the Duke of Wellington at the ear-

liest possible moment, was altogether natural, and what might have been easily anticipated. Can any one at the present moment, even conceive of the possibility of such a state of things, as an administration presided over by that masculine and straightforward mind, in which, on a matter of vast public importance, half of the cabinet were openly and actively supporting one line of policy, and the remaining half a totally different one? Does not the impossibility of the existence of such a predicament under the management of the Duke of Wellington, strike every one; and does not this conviction of itself establish the fact, of the folly of those who permitted such a system to be carried on for nearly twenty years?

It was not, then, to be imagined by any reasonable man, that a cabinet in which the Duke of Wellington held a leading position, could continue in the course which had been adopted by Lord Liverpool. That course, dictated by weakness, ensured the constant growth and increase of the very principle which the amiable but irresolute premier himself personally dreaded. That growth and increase had of itself brought matters into a position which rendered some new determination indispensable; even had it been otherwise possible for the "open question" system to exist under the new administration. All men, therefore,

might reasonably look for a change in the policy of the Government. The great majority of the people of England, decidedly opposed to Popery ; delighted with the Duke of Wellington's government ; gratified to perceive that he had the power, and pleased to believe also, that he had the will, to take a new and bolder position of uncompromising hostility,—looked with eager expectation for a manifestation of the expected change. It came at last ; but it came to blight their hopes ; to fill their minds with grief, disgust, and dismay ; and to alienate their affections, in a very great degree, from the Tory or Constitutional party in the legislature.

On the 5th of February, 1829, the houses of Parliament were opened by a speech from the Throne, in which his Majesty called their attention to the laws imposing civil disabilities on his Roman Catholic subjects, and recommended to their consideration the question, whether the removal of those disabilities might not be effected consistently with the full and perfect security of our establishments in the Church and State. The explanations subsequently given by the principal members of the administration in both houses, left no doubt as to the determination of the Cabinet to concede to the fullest extent, what it had been the practice to denominate “ the Catholic Claims.”

Various embarrassments and changes naturally flowed from this sudden alteration of the policy of the government. That, however, which had a direct influence on the fate and fortunes of Mr. Sadler, was one reflecting no disgrace on any of the parties concerned. Sir William H. Clinton, the Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance, was immediately informed that the "open question" system was at an end, and that all persons holding office were required to support the line of policy now adopted by the government. But Sir William had been returned by the borough of Newark on a positive declaration of his hostility to the Romish demands. He had repeatedly voted against those claims, and had already, in the present session, been entrusted with a petition signed by nearly the whole of his supporters in the borough, deprecating the proposed concession. It was therefore clearly impossible that he should obey the "word of command" in this instance. The alternative of course was taken. He applied for the Chiltern Hundreds, and gave back his trust, with a clear conscience, into the hands of his constituents.

There was probably no individual in the kingdom who felt more acutely on this subject than Sir William Clinton's noble relative, the Duke of Newcastle. Being the largest proprietor in the

borough of Newark, the inhabitants had always been accustomed to seek for one of their representatives among the members of his Grace's family; and it was in this way that Sir William Clinton's connection with the borough originated. On learning his relative's intention, his Grace, feeling the most lively interest in the discussions which were just opening in the House of Commons, and remembering Mr. Sadler's speech at the Pitt Club Anniversary of the preceding May, —wrote to him for the purpose of recommending him to proceed to Newark without delay, and there to announce himself a candidate for the vacant seat. After much hesitation, he decided on responding to this call; and at once set out for Newark, where he found that letters had already been received by the persons most in his Grace's confidence, desiring their best exertions in his favor.

He immediately commenced a canvas of the town, a work of some labor,—the franchise there appertaining to every cottage, and the number of electors being nearly 1800. His canvas was very successful, and he had every prospect of an unopposed return;—when a barrister of eminence from London, Mr. Serjeant Wilde, was suddenly brought into the field, and a contest of great warmth and exasperation commenced. Every

possible effort was used to inflame the passions of the more ignorant among the electors, and so effectual were the means employed, that it was not until the third day that Mr. Sadler took his proper place upon the poll ; which closed, on the fourth, with the following numbers :

Michael T. Sadler, Esq.	-	-	-	801
Thomas Wilde, Esq.	-	-	-	587
Majority				<u>214</u>

The return was made on the 6th of March, 1829, and appeared in the Gazette of the 10th. Mr. Sadler spent a few days in Newark, in offering his acknowledgments to his supporters, among whom were included almost every respectable inhabitant in the town, and then proceeded to London, where, on the 17th of the same month, he delivered his first speech in Parliament.

The emergency probably forced him to this immediate exertion ; but, remembering the turmoil through which he had so recently passed, and the disadvantages which an unpractised speaker would necessarily experience, in preparing, after the fatigues of a contested election, and of various journies, for such an assembly as the House of Commons, we should naturally be disposed to receive with some degree of allowance, his first attempt in that difficult arena. But we have little

occasion to avail ourselves of such considerations. Mr. Sadler's introduction to the British Parliament, under whatever circumstances of difficulty it might be made, was assuredly not one calculated to disappoint his friends, or to lower the expectations which the public at large had begun to form. The speech in question abounds with eloquent and striking passages ; it produced a powerful impression on the house ; of which no better proof is needed, than this, that almost every speaker on the ministerial side of the house who followed him in the debate, addressed himself to the task of replying to "the speech of the honourable member for Newark." Among these we may especially particularize Lord Palmerston and Mr. Robert Grant,—the latter of whom "could not refrain from expressing his admiration of the abilities which that honourable gentleman had displayed." In fact, the unanimous feeling of the public was correctly expressed by the leading ministerial journal of that day, which, while opposed to him in party attachment, could not but admit, that this single effort "placed him at once in the first rank of parliamentary speakers."

On the 30th of the same month he again spoke on the same question. This second effort probably exceeded in intrinsic merit the former ; but wanting the eclat of a first appearance, and com-

ing from a speaker from whom the public were now beginning to expect prodigies, it excited no surprise, and perhaps less admiration than its predecessor. The effect, however, and the circulation of these two speeches, throughout the country, exceeded almost any previous example. As separate publications, in the form of pamphlets, they were circulated to the extent of at least *half a million* of copies. Nearly every town of importance had its own edition, while in the metropolis about twenty very large impressions were sold. It may be doubted whether, on the whole, an effort enjoying a greater share of popularity and public favor, was ever made in Parliament.

There is no doubt, however, that a large share of this popularity must be placed to the account of the peculiar circumstances of the case. The people of England were at that moment peculiarly in want of a leader of Mr. Sadler's mental powers. Deserted, in one moment, by almost every man of commanding talent among those on whom they had been accustomed to rely, they felt the bitterness of their situation ; in having, as they fully believed, the merits of the question with them, but all the leading advocates of the day drawn up in the opposing ranks. They therefore were just in the mood to hail with the most delighted exultation the appearance of a man of genius and

intellectual power, who offered himself at the moment to raise their fallen banner. All this must be admitted, when we call to mind the extraordinary popularity of Mr. Sadler's first parliamentary efforts. Still, however, while we would not be guilty of the folly of claiming for these hasty effusions an equal rank with the greatest efforts of the first ornaments of English senatorial history, we must assert for them the degree of merit which is truly their own. They were impassioned and energetic appeals to feeling and to principle, and they contain several passages of great force and beauty. It would be wrong to fill these pages with large extracts from addresses already so extensively known ; but two passages appear to us of such value that we must venture on their introduction ; believing that they have a permanent value which will justify their repetition on any proper occasion.

“ But if we object to this change in the constitution of our country in itself, we resist it yet more strenuously in consideration of its certain consequences ;—consequences which are already but ill disguised by not a few of those who zealously support this measure. That the real liberties of the people will be put in jeopardy, I feel confident ; that the United Church of England and Ireland will be placed in peril the moment

this Bill is passed, is quite certain; as has been proved over and over again, by the very men who now support the proposition.” * * * *

“ This individual Act may, indeed, recognise its rights; what may the next do, when you have reinforced the ranks of legislation by a number of its implacable and conscientious enemies? The real object of attack, Sir, as has been often asserted here, is the Establishment, or rather its privileges and immunities. The war is commenced, and it is commenced in this place. The first parallel is nearly completed,—it may point diagonally,—another will be marked out in an opposite direction, till the whole will be completed,—till the gates of the constitution will have been approached, the breach effected, and its ancient ramparts levelled with the dust; and the final triumph will be over the most tolerant, the most learned, and the most efficient religious establishment with which any country has ever yet been blessed.” * * * *

“ I see, indeed, an oath is to be taken which verbally forbids Roman Catholics who take it from overturning the establishment; but they must be more or less than men to be enabled to keep such an oath. Totally inefficient as a security, it is immoral in its nature; it establishes a war between words and principles, between oaths and

conscience ; and which will finally prevail, needs no explanation.

“ When a number of Roman Catholics, then, shall have become seated in this house, to suppose that they will not feel disposed to lessen the influence of, and finally to destroy, a church which they conscientiously abhor, is absurd. That they should not make common cause for a similar purpose with other parties, inspired by similar views and feelings, is impossible ; and though I have heard honourable members inveigh strongly against the supposition, the sure operation of adequate motives will bring about this union, and will direct its energies and its efforts against the common object of its hostility,—the establishment. Much, indeed, has been said about the weakness of such a party in point of numbers ; but a party acting invariably in unison on this point will, as has been well urged, ultimately carry it, and, with it, all others of vital importance. They will form the nucleus of a growing party, to whom the measures of the crown must always be rendered palatable, and who, consequently, will so far dictate the future policy of the country. Such has been the case in past times ; the most important events that have ever occurred in our history have been carried by far smaller majorities than these could form, acting together, and, consequently,

holding the balance between the other different parties in the State ;—need I instance the Revolution and the Act of Settlement,—deliverances, which, if they could have been accomplished at all, could have been secured only by wading to the liberties of England through seas of blood, had not Popery been expelled from the legislature of the country.”

“ What then is the apology for this strange course, in which cowardice and apostasy are the avowed guides? It is expediency. Sir, I shall dwell for a moment on this new dogma, which I already perceive to be the alpha and omega of the modern school, and which I have been rebuked again and again for repudiating from the science of politics. I glory, Sir, in the rebuke,—in the quarter from which it comes,—in the cause on behalf of which it is given. Expediency, the arbiter as to the future religious character of our Constitution! Expediency, illumined by religion, and fortified by principle, is, indeed, a safe adviser; but what is it when it purposely divests itself of both? Expediency then, Sir, is the ready apology of the practised intriguer; the excuse of the ambitious slave; the justification of the inexorable tyrant! In a word, the lip-defence of the most unprincipled policy, of the most heinous crimes that have ever disgraced or desolated the earth.

And is this principle, Sir, to supplant, and in this hitherto Christian country, that safe, that necessary, that universal guide of human beings, in the most exalted, as in the humblest walk of existence, the rule of right ; a rule as inflexible as its Author, and which, like all his ordinations, however shrouded for a moment by doubts and difficulties, will ultimately resolve itself into benevolence, justice, and truth ?

“ But, Sir, it may be thought I am dogmatizing in morals instead of addressing myself to policy, when thus speaking of expediency. I will therefore remove the argument in order to place it on the foundation of human experience. Sir, history opens at every page on instances, inscribed in the most appalling characters, of the just punishment which has ever awaited individuals, or bodies of men, or nations, when following so selfish and tortuous a path. I will not speak, Sir, of the pecuniary injuries it has perpetrated, the individual spoliations of property, or the degradation of rank it has occasioned ; I will present a more general view of its effects on society at large. Take an instance or two. What, Sir, did this expediency do for France, when, at the commencement of a state of things, upon which I fear we are now entering,—it was adopted as the rule of public men ;—when the benevolent

Louis, after having established a free constitution in behalf of a beloved, but fickle and ungrateful, people, was surrounded by a knot of expediency-mongers, who, whether sincere cowards, ambitious knaves, or hypocritical traitors, advised the surrender of one principle and prerogative after another, till Christianity itself was extinguished, and the taper of expediency glimmered in the moral darkness which then fell upon that desolated country, when all that was venerable or just was swept away, and the life of the monarch himself was the last sacrifice upon the altar of this expediency?

“But an appeal to a neighbouring nation, whose past events, I fear, are already casting their dark shadows upon the pages of our own fate, and adumbrating the course we are infatuated enough to pursue, may not be admitted, especially by the vindicators of its revolution. Let us then turn to the experience of our own country, and see the inevitable consequences of following, in the hour of real difficulty, such a guide. Let, Sir, the appropriate appeal be to the previous downfall of your own Church and Monarchy. It was at that period that this very House thought it expedient to mark out a noble victim, not indeed, either as a human being, or a patriot perhaps, without his failings, but who bore towards his King and country a faithful and a loving heart,—I mean the

great Strafford,—(whose noble descendant I regret to see opposed to me on this occasion, and whose rebuke, touching this very expediency, I have received,)—it was expedient, Sir, that he should be sent to his trial,—it was expedient that those by whom he was tried should pronounce him guilty; lastly, it was expedient that his Sovereign should sign the warrant that surrendered the most faithful of his adherents to death, to calm and tranquillize, as it was then pretended, the public mind; all animosities, it was promised, should be buried in the grave of the victim, over which a long and perpetual friendship between Sovereign and subject was to be compacted and proclaimed. All this was promised, and by ‘large and triumphant majorities.’ How well that assurance was justified by the result, all who hear me know;—how far the grave of the murdered minister was apart from the grave of the murdered Monarch! The *denouement* of this tragedy, of which expediency was again the prompter throughout, was exhibited in the front of that edifice which I see you are now repairing. Expediency destroyed the Church,—it murdered the King!

“ But where might we end these appeals? One more shall be made; and as the matter and cause at issue are, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, plainly sacred, a most appropriate one. It

was when a temporizing minister of an ancient people was anticipating the difficulties of their situation, and making, in his day, his ‘choice of evils,’ and appealing to the dangers to be apprehended from the interference of foreign power, as do the advocates of the present measure, that he determined an unexampled act was to be perpetrated, ‘lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation.’ ‘It is EXPEDIENT,’ said he, ‘that this man should perish?—that this sacrifice should be made!’ Sir, the present occasion is only less important than that. Protestant Ascendancy is now the victim,—Expediency still the priest. That sacred principle for which our fathers struggled so doubtfully and long, and which they deemed cheaply purchased at the expense of life,—that principle which has planted liberty, civil as well as religious, of the press as well as of conscience, in this happy country, and which has watered the sacred plant so profusely with its best blood; which has diffused its lights abroad till it has rendered this country the preceptor of mankind; which has nerved its arm and manned its heart in the hour of danger, and constituted it the champion as well as the exemplar of freedom,—that principle which has fostered the learning, liberated the genius, warmed the charities, purified the morals of this great Pro-

testant nation ;—a principle ‘ the noblest,’ as the great Chatham exclaimed, ‘ for which ever Monarch drew his sword, or subject shed his blood,’ is about to be surrendered from a cowardly apprehension of dangers, which, however, the advocates of this measure do not pretend that it will dissipate, but only change,—not remove, but, perhaps, postpone. It is about to be surrendered to expediency! In a choice of evils, it is asserted that this ‘ breaking in upon the Constitution ’ would be the lesser one!

“ Sir, the measure ought not thus to be presented ; it is a choice of evil in preference to good. Banish, Sir, this crooked policy ; this disgraceful guide, and the choice will be good ; present and permanent good. In the ancient path in which your ancestors so nobly trod, there may indeed be difficulties interposed, obstacles to be overcome, as in the path of duty and of glory there ever have been ; but meet them nobly, they will but heighten your achievement and increase its reward. Preserve your Constitution ; defend your establishments ; become the true friend, the real benefactor, of Ireland ; succour and save her by safer, kinder, surer methods than those now proposed ; and your patriotic efforts will have the approbation of your own consciences, the gratitude of your country, and the applauses of posterity.”

CHAPTER VI.

A. D. 1829.

REMAINDER OF HIS FIRST SESSION IN PARLIAMENT.

IT will be sufficiently obvious to every one of the least reflection, that while a favourable commencement of a parliamentary career, must be in general a most auspicious circumstance, a *debut* of prodigious and perhaps excessive eclat is of all things the most undesirable. Such was the sensation produced by Mr. Sadler's first efforts, and such the impression left by them on the public mind, that no human powers could have sufficed to maintain that impression. The multitude generally, too, are not accustomed to discriminate wisely, or to take into their account the various circumstances of every case ; and thus it necessarily happens that they generally overpass the limits of truth and justice, both in their blame and in their approbation. There can be no doubt, that the common feeling, on finding that Mr. Sadler was not about to make a brilliant speech at least every alternate week, was that of disappointment mingled with some

degree of discontent. And hence arose a prevalent notion, which is yet often to be met with,—that Mr. Sadler fell short of the promise of his first appearance;—that he was equal to a single effort, but not competent to sustain that effort through a whole career; that, in short, he vaunted for a while in the foremost ranks, but soon fell back into a lower and more befitting station. This, however, was an unjust judgment, not only as being untrue, but as being altogether the *reverse* of the truth. There is no doubt, indeed, that a degree of eclat attended Mr. Sadler's first efforts in Parliament, which was in a great measure absent during the rest of his career; but for that eclat, which arose mainly from extrinsic circumstances, it would be the extremest absurdity to make him accountable. And, throwing all such considerations out of view, and sitting down to the perusal of Mr. Sadler's speeches, without any regard to the passing opinions of the day, there is no competent judge who will feel the least doubt, that, so far from declining from his earliest brilliancy,—his efforts rather rose than diminished in power and talent, and his latest addresses were his best.

One trivial circumstance, indeed, assisted the spread of the impression, that his powers had been exhausted by a single effort,—and that circumstance was, the state of lassitude and inertness

into which the political world seemed to fall, immediately the great apostacy of 1829 was completed, and the struggle of contending principles was over. Disgust and discontent brooded over one portion of the house, while the other contemplated their victory with doubtful misgivings ; and thus, between both, the session of 1829 wore out its remaining weeks amidst a variety of mixed and perplexed feelings on all sides.

It is well known, that Mr. Sadler's personal feelings were so involved in the Protestant cause, for which he had just been pleading, that the sentiments of disgust and almost of despair, to which we have just alluded, took strong possession of his mind. Nevertheless, as the session advanced, and divers measures came before the House, touching which he entertained very decided opinions, he began to address himself to his duty, and to take his fair share in the discussions which arose.

The question of Free Trade came before Parliament, as involved in the measures proposed for the governance of our Silk Manufacturers ; and on this topic Mr. Sadler spoke briefly on the 13th of April, and a second time, and at more length, on the 1st of May. He also took part, on the 19th of May, in the debate on the Anatomy Bill.

But the circumstance which tested and established his powers and his character, occurred in

the course of a discussion on *his own* question, that of Poor Laws for Ireland, which was brought before the House of Commons, without any concert or communication between him and the mover, by Mr. Villiers Stuart, on the 7th of May. This occasion was seized upon by Mr. Wilmot Horton, the chairman of the Emigration Committee, whose reports Mr. Sadler had handled somewhat roughly in his work on Ireland,—to call Mr. S. to a public account for his statements and reasonings on that work. At a moment's notice was the assailant met, and most triumphantly overthrown: in fact, the house rung with cheers when Mr. Sadler concluded his reply. Galled at his defeat, Mr. Horton sought for another opportunity of grappling with his antagonist. On the 4th of June he offered a series of resolutions to the house, avowedly as a mere expedient by which he might renew his controversy with Mr. Sadler. Again was he met, without preparation or hesitation, and again was his defeat the most signal. Mr. Sadler's speech on the second of these occasions, contains passages of such terseness and power, that we should be inclined to extract largely from the report, were it not better, perhaps, on the whole, to offer our readers the sketch of this little controversy which we find in the pages of one of the leading periodicals of that day.

“ Mr. Sadler possesses a promptness and dexterity which render his resources readily available in the emergencies of debate, and cause his most expert and experienced adversaries to feel that he is not to be taken at fault, and that he is always prepared to give a reason for the faith that is in him. Perhaps no one would be more inclined to acknowledge this than poor Wilmot Horton. That pertinacious experimentalist (the most persevering and indefatigable of tentative legislators) was not easy until he selected Sadler for single combat in the House, and called upon him—a thing somewhat unusual—to answer, “ *in propria persona*,” for certain allegations respecting the Emigration Committee, which were contained in his work on the State of Ireland. The answer was accordingly given, and the baffled querist was put to silence, if not to shame. It was so fully, so eloquently, so completely given, as to give rise to the suspicion that the question, instead of being a stratagem to take him by surprise, was a contrivance concerted for the purpose of enabling him to appear to advantage. But that suspicion Wilmot Horton himself speedily removed, by the impertinent and unseemly repetition of his interrogatories. He was again in the field ; and, armed at all points, he again threw down the gauntlet to his reposing conqueror. Sadler met him again at

a moment's notice, and his figures, both arithmetical and rhetorical—which he was persuaded, by some laughing demon, to consider a divinely-tempered shield and spear, which must render him invincible in mortal combat—shivered into fragments at the Ithuriel touch of the weapons employed by his calm and resolute assailant, whose manly understanding detected the sophistry, and whose honest English feeling exposed the inhumanity of a system, the cruelty and injustice of which is only equalled by its extravagance and absurdity. To Wilmot Horton's credit be it spoken, that from that day forth *he asked him no more questions.*" *

On the 12th of June Mr. Sadler presented an important Petition from the hundred of Blackburn in Lancashire, signed by about 12,000 persons, complaining of the distressed state of their trade, and craving the attention of the house to their situation. A debate arose on this petition, and Mr. Sadler twice addressed the house with much power. This was, we believe, the last occasion on which he spoke, during that session, as the house shortly after was prorogued.

In returning homewards, Mr. Sadler tarried for

* *Blackwood's Magazine.* Aug. 1829, p. 234.

a few days at Newark, having received an invitation to dine with his constituents at the Town Hall, on the 24th of July. We select from his speech delivered at that dinner, a single passage, as indicative of the course which the speaker was already taking, and which, as we shall hereafter frequently observe, continued to be his own peculiar and characteristic line, during the whole of his continuance in Parliament.

Having adverted, as it was natural to do, to the great subject of discussion during the past session, Mr. Sadler soon passed to that which was ever uppermost in his own mind,—the condition of the great mass of the people. The numerous petitions which had been presented during the latter part of the session, bore testimony to the existence of a great amount of distress, and that among many different departments of industry. It was to such questions as these that Mr. Sadler's mind constantly recurred :

“ What, I would ask, is the cause of this state of distress? A state which returns at lessening intervals, and which, at every repeated visitation, inflicts on the country increasing and long-continued sufferings? Various indeed have been the causes to which these distresses have been attributed ; and many “ explanations ” have been given on the subject. At one time it was said

that we had too little industry, and at another they were ascribed to over-production. Then there was a scarcity of money, and to this succeeded an excess of capital ;—afterwards it was the farmer, and then again it was the banker—and now, it is said, “ our distresses are owing to causes over which Government has no control,” and therefore it is attributed—to Providence ! And thus is the government always ready enough to claim the merit of national prosperity when it is enjoyed ; but still more anxious to throw the sufferings of the country upon “ Providence ” or the people, when general distress is experienced. I believe, however, that “ Providence ” is innocent of the infliction, and that these sufferings are in a great measure chargeable upon the absurd and anti-national policy which has been adopted of late years ; and that they are remediable by returning to a wiser, a kinder, and more rational course : one by which the nation rose to its princely height and balmy state of prosperity, and from which it has regularly declined since an opposite policy has been adopted. No, it is not to God, but to men, *whose duty it is to inquire into the cause of these sufferings*, that they are attributable ; and if government and the legislature cannot prevent these distresses, at least they have the power, and ought to shew the disposition, to solace

those who are ground down to the earth by poverty, by convincing the country that they are desirous of finding out *what are the causes of these great calamities.*

“ But “ why mourns the muse for England ? ”
—England, which, beyond all other nations upon earth, has all the elements of national prosperity within itself, heightened and enhanced by every thing which can give those elements their utmost value, and invest them with perpetuity. A country of unexampled fertility ; capable of sustaining by its own means, and in plenty and prosperity, many millions more than it now almost starves ; with riches beneath its surface, of incalculable value : possessing a mine of inexhaustible wealth around her shores ; with territories all but boundless in extent, which, spreading like a zone round the habitable globe, pour into her lap the products of all climes, and open a communication with every country upon earth : favoured beyond all other nations in climate ; fortunate in position ; and above all, possessing a population unrivalled in industry, in enterprise, in character, and in capital ; and having enjoyed all these advantages during a long and uninterrupted peace ! What, I would ask the statesman, are the causes which are shaking the very foundations of our national prosperity ; and

inflicting misery on the great mass of the population? This is the fearful political enigma, which it behoves the Government of this country to attempt to solve; *and which must be solved speedily to the better satisfaction of every class of the community*, or a state of things still more fearful may be apprehended. When to physical force the impetus of hunger is superadded; it requires little foresight to prognosticate the result.

“Gentlemen, I repeat, that I think the distresses under which the nation is now labouring are remediable;—remediable, not by the adoption of some new theory,—by the application of some untried experiment,—by the exhibition of some mere political panacea; but by returning to so much of that sound and genuine policy of our more humane, if not wiser, forefathers, as the altered circumstances of the country may render practicable. By fostering and encouraging industry, whether agricultural, manufacturing, or commercial; by restoring a full and yet a healthy circulation, objects of identical instead of incompatible pursuit, whatever some may write and talk to the contrary; by pursuing a system of rigid economy; by better encouraging, and more adequately remunerating, British labour in all its essential branches; by supporting in their just rights and essential interests, every rank of soci-

ety, and above all, the labouring classes of the community, whose prosperity is the foundation of all others. These are the means, simple and obvious, though rejected by inveterate selfishness, and ridiculed by theoretic folly, which would, and in no long time, revive and perpetuate the prosperity of the country. The detail of these propositions, I shall not now enter upon. When I retire from this most gratifying visit, it will be to that privacy where I purpose to pursue the subject in which I have been long anxiously engaged—with what success remains to be tried—and which I trust, ere long, to submit to the British public. England wants nothing but the principles of common sense and common benevolence applied to the management of her affairs, to restore her to present, and I may add, perpetual prosperity. Then (if in this hour of festivity I may be allowed to indulge in my imagination,) I can contemplate the genius of our country reposing on some lofty height, beneath the shade of his primeval oaks; and, surrounded by the trophies of his triumphs, resting in peace after his heroic achievements, and casting his gratified gaze on the wide-spread prospects before him; eyeing the progress of cultivation, the triumphs of the ploughshare and the pruninghook, in a country overflowing with plenty, and echoing the cheerful voice of contented labour.

Then would he see our populous cities and crowded marts swarming with a busy population; while along the circling shores of the country, and in every port, those that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy business in the mighty waters, would resume their heroic calling; then not a wave could break on our cliffs, but would bear some accession to our national wealth; not a wind from whatever quarter of the globe could blow, but would waft some tribute to our shores. Then, in a long and unbroken reign of peace, should knowledge still extend its humanizing sway, genius renew its triumphs, and religion elevate the character of the country. Then should our national prosperity “stretch out even to the crack of doom,” and the march of British greatness and glory extend to the utmost verge of time, and terminate only on the threshold of eternity.”

From Newark, Mr. Sadler proceeded to join his family in Yorkshire;—and shortly after repaired with them to Redcar, a retired sea-bathing place in that country, for the usual purposes of health and relaxation. It was during this sojourn at Redcar, that he was waited upon one morning, by a deputation from the town and port of Whitby, bringing with them a request, signed by nearly all the wealth and respectability of that important

town, that he would accept the honor of a Public Dinner, in testimony of their appreciation of "his high character and splendid talent," and especially of their concurrence in his views, touching the commercial system of Great Britain. To such an invitation, the circumstances of his own leisure and vicinity being all in favor of the applicants, it was obviously impossible for him to return a refusal. The dinner accordingly took place on the 15th of September, and was attended, as the journals of the day informs us, "by every individual of note in Whitby, with about three exceptions." The peculiarity of the case was well adverted to by Mr. S. at the opening of his speech.

"The last time, indeed, I was in public, I was sharing a similar favour from my generous and highly-valued constituents, who, since I have had the honour of being their representative, have loaded me with great and increasing obligations: but here, where no such connexion could have suggested the present compliment; where, till on this occasion I was entirely unknown, and had not, personally, a single acquaintance; I cannot but regard your present attentions, as one of the most unequivocal proofs ever tendered to any man, that his public conduct had met with general approbation. To be surrounded, as I am at the present moment, by a company of gentlemen of the high-

est respectability, whether it regards wealth, character, or information,—and more numerous than I could have supposed this place, respectable as it is, could have possibly mustered on any such occasion ; and above all, unanimous, as I am given to understand, in their approbation of the political principles of the humble individual who is now addressing you, is indeed a distinction, of which any man in this kingdom, whatever be his rank, whatever his station, might feel justly and deeply proud.”

We must be permitted to reckon this speech among Mr. Sadler’s happiest efforts. It was, indeed, nearly the first favourable opportunity he had ever enjoyed of appearing in his true character,—that of the real statesman. His late harangues in Parliament, popular as they had made him, could convey but a very faint and imperfect idea of the true bent and capacity of his mind. He was now, for the first time, and with sufficient scope,—being necessarily the oracle of the evening,—permitted to give a rapid sketch of that great subject which filled his mind and inspired all his efforts,—*the improvement of the condition of the great mass of the people*. His address, however, is so closely woven as to render it difficult to do it justice by the selection of fragments ; and yet there are several passages which offer strong temptation. We will borrow only two of these.

The state of most of the great interests of the country at that moment, 1829, was unquestionably one of considerable suffering, attended by a proportionate degree of gloom and dread of the future. Referring to this, Mr. S. observed :—

“But now that the general distress can be no longer denied, still this darling theory is to be defended, by attributing our sufferings to other causes ; and it must be confessed that they give us abundance of choice. Sometimes it has been laid to the charge of stagnation, more frequently to over-production ; now the bankers are in fault, —now the traders ; our agriculturists have produced too much ; or they have produced too little. We have had a surplus of capital,—we have had a want of it ; but now it seems that an indifferent harvest or two is the most convenient apology for our distresses ; which distresses, however, commenced before the harvests were deficient ; but had it been otherwise, variations in our seasons always have existed, and ever will recur, as certainly, though perhaps not so regularly, as the cycles of the planetary system. And for these, as they must always be expected, a wise and paternal government will never be unprepared. In a word, the people of England, it has long appeared too plainly, cannot trade to the satisfaction of their rulers ; nor does Providence ap-

pear to please these rulers any better. Two facts, however, are certain; first, that the distress is great: and, secondly, that its date is coincident with that of the operation of the new theory; witness the statistics of misfortune, of poverty, of crime, in the instant and vast increase of bankruptcies, the multiplication of criminal committals, the rise in the poor-rates, all taking their date from the identical period in question. Can events of so striking and tremendous a character exist without a cause, and one adequate to their production? It were absurd to suppose it. One of the most important duties of the government is, therefore, to search it out, and, instead of withstanding those public inquiries, for which the people have so long and so loudly called, to solicit, rather than reject, their evidence and information.

“It appears to me, that we can best approach this inquiry by a series of negatives:—And first, it is not Providence that is chargeable with the miseries of the people;—on the contrary, never was there a country so endowed with whatever could administer to its comforts, promote its prosperity, or secure its greatness. All the real elements of wealth are contained within our shores; all the accidents which could favour their development are also ours. We have long enjoyed a pro-

found and uninterrupted peace. We have a country, unrivalled in fertility, and ample in extent; only partially cultivated, and capable of sustaining, as future generations will prove, a vast accession of inhabitants in far greater plenty than our present population enjoys. Beneath us are minerals of the most valuable kind. Without, our territories encircle the earth, accumulating on our shores the products of all regions, and opening a door of access to all countries. We have a climate unrivalled in salubrity, and a position among the nations the most fortunate; surrounded by the ocean, which is not only the very element of British safety and glory, but an inexhaustible mine of wealth. Such, without an hyperbole, is the condition in which Providence has placed us; such the bounties the Deity has poured upon us. The sacred and figurative language of the East, which now occurs to me, might be applied to England, as emphatically as to an equally distinguished and unthankful country of old,—“He has placed our vineyard on a very fruitful hill, he has fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and built a tower in the midst of it, and planted it with the choicest vine.”—And it may still be asked as it was of old, “What could be done more to his vineyard than he has done in it?” I fear I may con-

tinue the citation with equal truth,—“He looked for judgment, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry!” But I defy any man to answer the solemn question as it respects England, so as to lay in any measure the misery of this people at the door of eternal Providence.

“Nor, secondly, is it the character or conduct of the inhabitants to which the present distress of the country is attributable. On the contrary, there is not a population upon earth more prone to labour, more active, enterprising, or intelligent in their exertions; more persevering in their pursuits; none who have so great an abundance of capital, that idol of the present system, by which, according to its doctrine, our national advantages can alone be developed or distributed. Whoever, therefore, or whatever has occasioned the existing distress, the people are guiltless.

“Nor is it the number of our countrymen which has produced it. Fashionable as is this diabolical doctrine, for diabolical it is, inasmuch as it begins by affronting God, and issues in injuring man; it is, like many other fashionable notions, utterly false. It is the prerogative of God, saving the presence of our political economists, to decide this question; and he has decided it, in the superabundance of the means of human subsistence, which, as a nation, he has lavished

upon us, placed within our reach, and solicited us to accept. Whether in reference to the resources of the country, or its means of profitable employment, if properly developed, there is not a sinew or an arm too many in the empire, no, nor elsewhere; any more than there is a superfluous spirit called into the realms of immortality by the Eternal God! Short indeed, and infernal, would be the remedy, were this revolting notion true. Deportation of every kind, murder in all its forms, indirect or otherwise, would be obvious and general benefits. Still, however, the promulgators of this notion, with the habitual selfishness of the system, pronouncing upon the redundancy of human beings, invariably except themselves. The Christian advocates of this doctrine are not its personal converts;—whether as it respects life, or its propensities and feelings, they make no personal sacrifices! They are no Curtiuses!—but I see your indignation at the very mention of these notions: and, rather than on the dogmas of the political economists, we will still rest, as to this matter, upon the assurances of Him who “giveth food to all flesh; for his mercy endureth for ever.”

“In whatever point of view, therefore, we regard this great nation, we may assert, that its natural state is one of prosperity and happiness. Such

is the condition which it ought to enjoy. And the minister to whom, in effect, the country commits the charge of seeing that the public “receive no injury,” ought to render a reason for its condition if it be otherwise.”

He then proceeds to a close examination of the real causes of the prevailing distress, into which our limits forbid us to follow him. At the close, he brings the subject to a graceful and natural close, by an allusion to the state of their own town. Condoling with those who surrounded him on their darkened prospects, he carried their views beyond their own circle, and forwards to brighter days, in the following animated exordium.

“ But in making these observations, I do not sympathise with you so deeply, Gentlemen, as with those who would have been better employed, and more amply paid by you, had the former system been allowed to remain. The ship-builders and merchants of Whitby have lived in other and better times, and are, I understand, as a body, wealthy in an unusual degree, and can therefore sustain these reverses, or leave the business, though at great sacrifices, which subjects them to such loss. But the workmen,—what is to become of them? And here I will make my last allusion to the new principle; it is at the lower and industrious classes that it principally takes its aim,—in

which the legislature has long been too much its abettor. Paley says expressly, that “the care of the poor ought to be the principal object of all laws ; for this plain reason, that the rich are able to take care of themselves ;” but were I to say that any of the late regulations have been dictated by these feelings, I should compliment the benevolence of their projectors at the expense of their intelligence. I will compliment neither. The modern system, which has been insinuating itself amongst us by degrees, I hold to be an attack upon the privileges of labouring poverty throughout. In agriculture, this spirit dictates what Lord Bacon calls, the engrosment of great farms ; by which a hundred little cultivators must be thrown out of a decent occupation, and replaced by one ; if the theorists can make it out that a grain more of “surplus produce,” to use their cant expression, can be so obtained. In manufactures, it would, as the Edinburgh Encyclopedia justly expresses it, “turn out of employment the entire population ; if the master manufacturer, by the employment of machinery, could save an additional five per cent.” In commerce it exhorts you “to buy where you can buy cheapest ;” though you leave the multitude, who enable you to purchase at all, without employment, raiment, and bread. In shipping, it allows the native mariner, whose life is a life of danger,

and whose death is often one of glory, and who may be called upon at any moment to fight the battles of his country, to be ground down or supplanted, as it may happen, by the slaves of some foreign despot, who perhaps victuals them upon black bread and oil. As to currency, its object is to secure capital, but curtail credit, which, in other terms, is but refusing to humble industry the aid of the principal implement by which its future wealth might be created,—clipping the wings by which poverty can alone hope to rise from the earth. Even in science, I am sorry to say, this “infection works.” If, for instance, anatomy has to be promoted,—but I recal the idea;—here at length the poor are allowed the privilege of monopolizing the market. Subjects for the human shambles are to be supplied by the friendless poor exclusively;—those legislators who have illumination enough to laugh at their prejudices, as they call them, nevertheless refuse their own carcasses to the carving-knives of the dissectors! These, however, are not the most striking instances which might be adduced in proof that the spirit of modern legislation,—since we have deserted the humane, benevolent, aye, and politic principles of our Christian forefathers,—is hostile to the real interests of the working classes. Such are, and have long been,

my settled feelings and sentiments, and I utter them in no hostility, open or disguised, against the other and higher ranks of society, whom, on the contrary, I have always attempted to support, in my humble sphere, in their just rights and privileges. It is to secure these, as well as to serve the lower orders, that I thus speak, and I shall act conformably. But the present legislative philosophy attempts to place the pyramid of national prosperity upon its apex instead of its base; its anxieties are about the summit, when it should be attending to the foundation. My preceding observations are not levelled at any set of men in power, personally considered;—on the contrary, it has always been my wish to support the government of the country as far as I conscientiously could; and the present ministry had more especially my good wishes. I had differed from their new policy, indeed, ever since they introduced it,—the “thunder” of the opposite party, however the ownership is contended for, (the lightning attending which has scorched and withered all our vital interests);—but I imagined that they were supporting what I conceived to be of still more importance to the country even than its interests,—namely, its principles. I have found myself lamentably deceived. I cannot, therefore, as an Englishman, always make up my mind to

think and speak of men in power,—the dispensers of public favours and rewards,—as some do, who are ever ready to declare

“ Whate’er they do,
“ Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.”

No ; I am not one of those chameleons who take their changeful hue from some object near which they are crawling ; I wish, as is likewise fabled of that reptile, that *such* could also live upon air ; —it would be far better for the public purse, and no worse for public principle.

“ I fully meant, on such an occasion, and before I had concluded, to have adverted to that line of policy which I humbly think ought to be adopted ; and which, without any violent revulsions, much less untried plans, would still, and I think speedily, restore the nation to its wonted prosperity. I have, however, already exhausted your patience, and shall therefore conclude ; not that I shrink from the task, or shall refrain from submitting my ideas on this important subject on a proper occasion. In the mean time, do I despair concerning the country ? God forbid ! She will recover, and recover the sooner, because she is even now loathing the potions with which she has been lately drenched. She may be prostrated for the present ; but, like another Antæus, she will rise,

with renewed strength, from every overthrow. She will yet prosper ; not, indeed, because of the councils of her rulers, but in spite of them. Yes ; this mighty nation, unrivalled for ages in military and naval glory,—foremost in the pursuits of science,—warmest in every work of philanthropy,—brightest in the paths of genius ;—the nurse of liberty,—the asylum of religion,—the mother of mighty nations, who shall spread her language, perpetuate her institutions, and submit to her moral empire, when the dominion of her power shall have passed away ;—this country is destined yet, I hope and believe, to become, in the hands of a gracious Providence, the benefactress of the universe. She will yet vindicate her own principles, and assert her own cause. She may, like many a gallant bark that has taken refuge in your friendly port, be now at sea, in danger and distress, the sport of adverse winds, and tossed on the dark and tempestuous waves ; but, if I may apply the fiction of Virgil to a nobler purpose, the Deity shall himself appear, and, smiting the unfaithful Palinurus, shall seize the helm, and pilot the vessel through the subsiding storm, into the haven of prosperity and peace.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE VACATION OF 1829—MR. SADLER'S WORK ON POPULATION.

OUR last chapter left Mr. Sadler at Redcar, where, however, his time was not devoted to relaxation or the pursuit of health, as his friends had anxiously hoped would have been the case; but to the completion of that great work by which, above all other claims to veneration, his memory will in future ages be distinguished. He had unhesitatingly and fearlessly declared war with the "economists," but none knew better than himself, that to maintain the ground he had taken, it was necessary to destroy, utterly and for ever, the central post and main reliance of the opposing party,—the Malthusian theory. To this task, therefore, he instantly and ardently devoted himself.

We have said that the position he had taken up rendered this necessary. That position is well described in the periodical work from which we have already quoted. The writer says :—

“The Economists for the first time heard their infallibility called in question, and felt their ascendancy in danger. They, who had so long domineered by the force of barren theories, over the understanding and the feelings of the House, and whose general principles were admitted as indisputable, even by those who yet felt them to be ruinous to trade and agriculture, and who exclaimed against the cruelty and the impolicy of their application; these sages of the Satanic school in politics, encountered an adversary by whom their favourite measures were opposed, and their most familiar axioms disputed; and that, not by scholastic sophistry, or unfounded assertion, or empty vehemence, or school-boy declamation, but by a reference to facts and to history, by a diligent and philosophical observation of human society, and the physical laws by which it has been governed in every age and country in the world.

“Sadler has done this. Be he right or wrong—and it would be premature to pronounce finally upon the merits of a system which is not as yet fully developed—he is the man whose warning voice called the attention of the honourable House of which he bids fair to be so distinguished a member, to the first principles of the Economists; who bid them turn their eyes from the capitalist to the labourer; and who had the spirit and the

feeling to ask them, and that with the voice of one having authority, whether that could be a good system, or entitled to an exclusive preference, under the influence of which, capital must increase at the expense of humanity ; where what is called wealth only serves to oppress and to paralyse industry ; and national prosperity is made to take the resemblance “ of Moloch, horrid god, besmeared with gore,” and to proceed upon its course amidst the sweat, and the blood, and the groans of its victims.”*

Now in thus declaring open war with so powerful and so insolent a party, Mr. Sadler had not acted with rashness or inconsideration. He felt assured of the truth and importance of his own convictions ; but at the same time his deep and thoughtful search into the subject, had long previously satisfied him, that until the theory of Malthus was fully and completely destroyed, the Economists could never be finally driven from the field.

His investigation of this subject commenced about the year 1825, when engaged in the preparation of his Lectures on the Poor Laws, of which we have already spoken. In treating, in those lectures, of the rights of the poor, he found no difficulty in establishing the Divine right of the

* *Blackwood's Magazine* ; Vol. XXVI, p. 235.

indigent to relief, as set forth in holy writ ;—nor yet in shewing their prescriptive or conventional right, by the general consent of mankind in all ages : But when he came to prove the same right on moral principles, he was instantly met by the still unrefuted dogmata of Malthus ;—That the human race, as now constituted, shewed a constant tendency to increase beyond any possible increase of food ; that, on this account, the check of moral restraint, arising from the fear of want and starvation, was ever required to be kept in their view ;—and that, as a necessary consequence, in endeavouring to destroy this wholesome apprehension of want and starvation, by actually providing against their occurrence, men were merely waging an insane and mischievous war with the immutable laws of the universe, and striving to counteract the fundamental principles of human existence.

Thus he came, by continual reflection on this subject, thoroughly to appreciate the difficulties of the question, and its bearing upon the whole state and prospects of the human race. And the same patient study also tended to increase his impression, that as “ Scripture could not be broken,” and as its decisions on this question were beyond all doubt,—so there must inevitably exist some latent error in a theory which was irreconcilable with those decisions ;—an error too, which in all

probability led to that apparent discrepancy which seemed to perplex the whole question.

With his mind in this state of doubt, Mr. Sadler began, with that honesty and resolution which were always conspicuous in his character, to enter upon a course of enquiry as to the facts of the case, which, for extent and perseverance, has probably never been equalled.

Commencing, first, with the well-stored public library at Leeds, he afterwards proceeded, at various periods, through most of the other great public collections, especially that in the British Museum; ransacking their catalogues for every imaginable source of information which they might contain, as to the state and progress of population in every quarter of the world. He thus accumulated four very large volumes of extracts on the subject; comprehending, beyond all doubt, a far more extensive view of the case than any other individual had taken the trouble to obtain.

It was in examining the calculations of perhaps the most eminent statistical writer of our time,—Susmilch, whose work he had taken the trouble to obtain from Germany,—that Mr. Sadler first perceived cause to suspect Mr. Malthus of a deficiency in that particular quality,—accuracy,—which, in a writer on such subjects, is beyond all others indispensable. He found Mr. M. transfer-

ring a table of Susmilch, which stands in the German thus

Jahre.	Getraute Paare.	Getaufte.	Gestorbene.
1709	5477	23,977	59,196
1710	{ „ „	{ „ „	188,537 } Pest.
			247,733
1711	{ 12,028	{ 32,522	10,131
6 3 3	17,505	56,499	„ „

into his work after the following fashion

Annual average.	Marriages.	Births.	Deaths.
Aver. of 5 years to 1697	5747	19,715	14,862
5 years to 1702	6070	24,112	14,474
6 years to 1708	6082	26,896	16,430
In 1709 and 1710	a plague	number destroyed in two years	247,733
In 1711	12,028	32,522	10,131

and then arguing most unhesitatingly, through half a dozen pages afterwards, upon this supposed fact, that “the number of marriages *in the year* 1711 was very nearly *double* the average of the six years preceding the plague.” The said “*doubling*” having been entirely his own creation, by

throwing all those marriages and births into 1711 alone, which Susmilch gives as belonging to

1710 }
1711 }

The discovery of this extraordinary and inexcusable mis-statement naturally awakened Mr. Sadler's suspicions ; and on testing the other assumed " facts " on which Mr. Malthus had rested his system, he found them, one after another, crumbling away at the least touch, and discovering themselves to be generally nothing more than bold guesses, or unaccountable blunders. Even those leading " facts " which Mr. M. had assumed, as needing no proof,—such as, the tendency of early marriages to over-stock the population ; and the propriety of the postponement of marriage in order thereby to check the dreaded increase,—turned out, on examination, to be nothing more than groundless suppositions. Actual scrutiny shewed that both by an accelerated rate of production, in the case of postponed marriages, and also by the smaller proportion of mortality among such children, the laws of nature easily counteracted and rendered nugatory, all ideas of a reduced amount of human increase, as resulting from such delayed unions.*

* *Sadler on Population*, book iii. ch. xvii.

In one entire class of females, whose registers were accessible, it appeared that the *permanent increase* resulting from their marriage was far greater in the cases of those who married between 24 and 27, than in those who married between 16 and 19.*

But, worse than this,—all the arithmetical calculations, and alleged statistical facts, with which Mr. Malthus's first chapter opens, and upon which his system is built, appeared, on a closer scrutiny, to be nothing more than a series of errors and absurdities. For instance, Mr. Malthus boldly asserts, that "Population has been found to double itself in fifteen years. Even this extraordinary rate of increase is probably short of the utmost power of population.—According to a table of Euler, calculated on a mortality of 1 in 36, if the births be to the deaths as 3 to 1, the period of doubling will be only $12\frac{4}{5}$ years. And these proportions are not only possible suppositions, but *have actually occurred for short periods in more countries than one.*" †

Here was an important fact broadly stated, but neither was the table itself produced, nor the countries in which population had so marvellously increased, even so much as named! Mr. Sadler,

* Sadler, vol. ii. p. 281. † Malthus, (ed. 1826) vol. i. p. 6.

therefore, had no other course than to sit down and construct a table for himself, shewing by what process this prodigious increase might occur. Such a table he therefore formed, and it will be found at p. 11 of his second volume. By it a duplication every $12\frac{4}{5}$ years is produced, but only by the following mean : 1. All the marriageable persons in the supposed population must actually marry at the age of 20. 2. All these married persons must have ten children for each such union. 3. All these ten children must live, in every case, to marry themselves, at the age of 20, and produce, in their turns, ten children for each union. 4. And, lastly, in this wonderful population, there must be *no deaths* ! Thus, and thus only, might the supposed duplication in $12\frac{4}{5}$ years be attained and kept up !

Of course, as such a state of things was altogether impossible, as the earth is at present constituted, it followed that that increase which Mr. Malthus asserted to have “ actually occurred in more countries than one,” must be absolutely impossible also.

From this fiction of a doubling in $12\frac{4}{5}$ years, Mr. S. proceeded to a more moderated statements of duplications in 15 and in 20 years, all which he proved by the same process to be alike, though perhaps not to the same degree, impossible.

Another of these vague generalities, resting upon nothing, concerned the alleged *actual* increase in the United States of America. Of this, Mr. Malthus had said, that “In the Northern States of America, where the means of subsistence have been more ample, the manner of the people more pure, and the checks to early marriages fewer than many of the modern states of Europe, the population has been found to double itself, for above a century and a half successively, in less than twenty-five years.” *

To which Mr. Sadler replied by one or two facts, which at once demolished this statement. In 1760, these very states, (New England,) contained 500,000 inhabitants. By this alleged process of duplication, say in 25 years, they would amount in 1835, to 4,000,000. Whereas, the census of 1820 shewed their numbers, in that year, to be only 1,638,435, and their *decennial* increase, between 1810 and 1820, to be only 186,368 !

Rhode Island was particularly named by Mr. Malthus as shewing a period of doubling of less than 22 years. Mr. Sadler shewed, that having in 1730, a population of 17,935, a doubling every 20 years would have carried its numbers, in 1830, to 573,920. Whereas in 1820, its whole population was only 83,038 !

* *Malthus*. Vol. I. p. 5. (ed. 1826.)

China had been dealt with by Mr. Malthus after a similar fashion. The fables of the Jesuit Missionaries of a century back had been eagerly resorted to for statements confirmatory of the favorite theory, and the corrections supplied by later travellers had been wholly disregarded. Thus China was still represented as containing 333 millions of inhabitants, although Malte-Brun, Grosier, Ellis, Timkowski, Dr. Morrison, Thoms, the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the *Bulletin Universel*, and the *Asiatic Journal*, all drawing from the best modern information, united in the conclusion, that about 150 millions is the real number. In the same manner the “Edifying and Curious Letters,” were resorted to for a representation that the Chinese live in “extreme misery,” that “millions of people perish with hunger,” and that infanticide is the common practice of the poorer classes. Whereas all modern travellers had given a totally different view of the case. Ellis says, “I have been much struck with the number of persons apparently in the middle classes, from which I am inclined to infer a wide diffusion of the substantial comforts of life :”—Von Braam that “it was easy to perceive that the inhabitants are strangers to poverty,”—and that “every thing wore the appearance of plenty and happiness :” Barrow, that “the countenances of the peasants

were cheerful and their appearance indicative of plenty:” and Sir George Staunton, that “the cottages are clean and comfortable.” While of the alleged infanticide, De Guignes declares, that “in his route through the whole extent of China,” he never met with an instance of it; and Mr. Ellis, giving the same testimony, adds, that “supposing any of the statements respecting it to have been well-founded, it will scarcely be believed that in passing over its populous rivers, through upwards of sixteen hundred miles of country, we should find no proof of its mere existence.”*

We must not, however, dwell longer on this part of the question. It may suffice to observe that, one by one, every material statement in Mr. Malthus’s work was sifted and tried; and the result of the whole investigation, to every candid and impartial reader, was, that the entire basis of facts upon which the author of the “*Essay on the Principle of Population*,” professes to rest his system, was utterly and for ever demolished and rooted up.

But having thus abundantly satisfied himself of the fallacy of Mr. Malthus’s statements, it became Mr. Sadler’s great object, to discover, and

* For larger extracts, see Mr. Sadler’s Work;—vol. I. book II. chap. xvi, xvii, xviii.

to exhibit, the real LAW OF HUMAN INCREASE. Knowing well that nothing in the universe happened by chance, but that even every comet flew, as well as every leaf fell, in obedience to the dictates of an immutable law, it became his anxious desire to ascertain, if possible, the real nature of that hidden decree, by which the ebbing and flowing of the tide of human population was governed. The far-famed dogmas of Malthus, the "arithmetical and geometrical ratios," he had already seen to be baseless fictions ; or rather mere phrases without meaning. But he was now earnestly engaged, amidst a myriad of recorded facts, in the endeavour so to classify and connect those facts, as to learn from them that secret law which produced and regulated them all.

The truth flashed upon him one morning, as it were instantaneously. While examining the census of England, the simple fact presented itself to his notice,—that the proportion of births and marriages varied greatly,—the births being more or less numerous in proportion as the population of the district was more or less scanty. Exclaiming with Archimedes, "I have found it ! I have found it !" —he instantly set to work to form a table of the counties of England, which appears at page 394 of his second volume ; and the results of which are as follows :—

	Marriages from 1810 to 1820.	Births from 1810 to 1820.	Proportion of births to 100 marr.
<i>Counties having less than 100 in- habitants to the square mile.</i>			
Westmoreland, York, N. R. .	15,807	66,434	420
<i>Counties having from 100 to 150 on the mile.</i>			
Lincoln, Cumberland, North- umberland, Hereford, Rutland, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Mon- mouth, Dorset	79,476	315,205	396
<i>Counties having from 150 to 200 on the mile.</i>			
York, E. R., Salop, Sussex, Northampton, Wilts, Norfolk, Devon, Southampton, Berks, Suffolk, Bedford, Bucks, Ox- ford, Essex, Cornwall, Durham .	264,516	1,033,039	390
<i>Counties having from 200 to 250 on the mile.</i>			
Derby, Somerset, Leicester, Nottingham	66,244	257,136	388
<i>Counties having from 250 to 300 on the mile.</i>			
Herts, Worcester, Chester, Gloucester, Kent	103,255	390,322	378
<i>Counties having from 300 to 350 on the mile.</i>			
Stafford, Warwick, York, W. Riding	111,941	395,070	353
<i>Counties having from 500 to 600 on the mile.</i>			
Surry, Lancaster	112,768	373,142	331
Middlesex	109,475	269,765	246

Now these results, fairly deduced—not arbitra-
rily or by selection, but by a just and natural

arrangement of *all* the known facts of the case—seemed at once to bring to light, the thing of which Mr. Sadler had long been in search ; namely, the true law of Human Increase ;—a law agreeing equally with the ascertained state of things on the one hand, and with the chief law of the creation, beneficence, on the other. But it was not his wont, either to raise a system upon a single fact, or to quit an investigation while still on the threshold of the subject. He therefore made this discovery, however important in itself, merely the first step in a series, which ended not while a single country within the limits of civilization remained unexamined, or a fact which could in any way be brought to bear upon the inquiry, was left without its place in the chain of evidence and argumentation.

Animated by the confident hope of achieving that for which he had long panted, his ardour in the pursuit and arrangement of authentic information on this great subject, seemed daily to increase. His incessant application at this period sensibly affected his health ; and was unquestionably one main cause,—his labours in the Factory Question in 1832 being the other,—of that fatal inroad on his constitution which ultimately led to his premature decease.

From the census of England, which had in the

first instance discovered to him the true principle, and which seemed to possess in itself abundant data for the establishment of that principle,—Mr. Sadler proceeded through the statistics of France, of Prussia, of the Netherlands, of Ireland, of America, of Russia, of Sweden, of New South Wales, and of the Cape of Good Hope. Besides these main branches of the enquiry, a variety of collateral proofs were called in, from time to time, from circumstances which lay beyond or below the range of the larger view. Such as, the facts relative to the Peerage of England,—the Towns of England, the Islands in the British Seas; and a variety of other subsidiary topics, which were attendant upon, rather than part of, the main inquiry. In fact, it was impossible for a statistical view of the progress of population in any country or in any period, to fall in Mr. Sadler's way, without being instantly seized upon and forced to contribute its quota of evidence in this great investigation. Even in the course of a few months after the publication of his work, he had gained a knowledge of as many as five new censuses,—of Prussia, Naples, Russia, Denmark, and Lombardy; all of which he instantly digested, and gave the results in his *Letter to the Edinburgh Reviewer*, which was published in the following spring. No opportunity was ever lost by him, of augment-

ing his store of facts on this question ; nor would his innate rectitude and sense of honor have permitted him to conceal any circumstance which these new sources of information might have disclosed of a nature contradictory to his own views ; —but to this test his candor was never brought. *Not a single case ever occurred*, in which the facts disclosed were of a different tenor to the general mass. So perfect a coincidence and agreement can in no way be accounted for, save as the result of a law alike universal and immutable.

We have hesitated whether to insert these various details, as needful to the full establishment of the principle ; or to omit them, as encumbering our narrative with a mass of dry statistics. On the whole, it seemed most advisable to postpone them to the close of the volume, where the reader who wishes to do full justice to the subject will find as condensed an abstract as it is in our power to give.*

Some, however, who may cast a hasty glance over these pages, will probably be inclined to ask, Wherein lies the vast importance of this controversy ; and in what does that practical difference between the two systems consist, which is assumed to be so momentous ?

* See *Appendix B*.

To this demand we must now endeavor to reply ; remarking, however, that among those who, like Mr. Sadler himself, have devoted much time and consideration to the question, how the condition of the poorer classes may be permanently ameliorated,—this demand will not often be made. Such persons will be well aware from their own experience, that the Malthusian theory, whenever admitted, has constantly operated to suggest doubts, and to raise difficulties, and, in effect, to check all the natural outgoings of benevolence and kindness towards the poor.*

The two systems are opposed to each other, in the most direct and positive manner. The one may be called the Paternal ; the other, the Selfish. The first is expansive, genial, beneficent, rejoicing ;—the second, contractive, withering, harsh, and full of a miser's fears.

The Paternal System, having, as we shall see, truth for its basis, cannot be better described than in the words of that book which is the only re-

* “ I am aware,” said Lord Althorp, in bringing forward his measure for the amendment of the Poor Laws, in the House of Commons, “ I am aware that in admitting the expediency of a poor law *of any kind*, I am expressing an opinion contrary to the strict principles of political economy ;—but upon these principles you may not only object to a poor law, but may even go further, and object to private charity itself !”

cord of unmingled truth and of perfect wisdom that we possess. The whole tenor of that record, is in favor of the Paternal system, and not a word of "surplus population," or of the imaginary horrors of a state in which the people shall have outgrown all possible supplies of food, can be found throughout its pages. It begins with a Divine command to the second father of the human race, "*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*" (Gen. ix. 2.) And in every successive instance in which a blessing is conferred, *increase* seems to be the most prominent feature of the benediction. "*God shall enlarge (or increase) Japheth,*" (Gen. ix. 27.) To Abraham it is said, "*I will make thee exceeding fruitful,*" (Gen. xvii. 6.) Of Ishmael, "*I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly,*" (Gen. xvii. 20.) Again to Abraham, "*I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore,*" (Gen. xxii. 17.) To Jacob, "*I will make thee fruitful, and will multiply thee, and will make thee a multitude of people,*" (Gen. xlvi. 4.)

The Israelites are exhorted to obedience, "*that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land,*" (Deut. viii. 1.) Again, it is said, "*As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the seed of David my servant,*" (Jerem. xxxiii. 22.) But we

must not attempt to adduce the half of the passages of this tenor which are found in Holy Writ. Suffice it to observe, that increase, a vast and countless increase, is always spoken of as the peculiar blessing of God, and a contrary state of scantiness or fewness of numbers, as the effect of his malediction.

Such is the constant language of that book, which is the only certain and infallible guide, that mankind has ever possessed.

Wholly opposed to this view, is the Malthusian theory. With the most downright selfishness for its ruling principle, its constant language is that of misery, alarm, and unreasoning terror.

“A man born into a world *already possessed*,” * says Mr. Malthus, “if he cannot get subsistence from his parents” (who may not be living,) “and if society does not want his labour, *has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food*, and, in fact, *has no business to be where he is*. At Nature’s mighty feast, there is no vacant cover for him. She *tells him to be gone*, and will quickly execute

* He does not hesitate to *assume*, that the world is “*already possessed*,” although not one tenth of its surface is yet brought under cultivation. Even in this “overpeopled” country, Britain, the territory still left uncultivated and unpossessed, exceeds thirty millions of acres, more than the half of which is capable of repaying the cultivator.

her own orders, if he do not work upon the compassion of some of her guests. If these guests get up and make room for him, *other intruders* immediately appear, demanding the same favor.”*

The remedy which Mr. M. very consistently proposes against these “intruders” is a very simple one.

“I propose a regulation to be made, that no child born from any marriage taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law, and no illegitimate child born two years from the same date, *should ever be entitled* to parish assistance.”

“This would operate as a fair, distinct, and precise notice.”

After this public notice had been given, the poor man marrying, is to be dealt with as one guilty of “an immoral act.”

“To the punishment of nature, he should be left, *the punishment of severe want.*” “All parish assistance should be *most rigidly* denied to him; and if the hand of private charity be stretched forth in his relief, the interests of humanity imperiously require that it should be administered very *sparingly*. He should be taught to know that the laws of nature, *which are the laws of God,*

* *Essay on Population*, 4to. p. 531.

had doomed him and his family to starve for disobeying their repeated admonitions.”*

Enough of such impiety,—nay, of such blasphemy! It is thus, as Adam Smith says, that “the fortunate and the proud wonder at the insolence of human wretchedness; and that it should dare to present itself before them, and with the loathsome aspect of its misery, presume to disturb the serenity of their happiness!”

Yet were these unhuman, these atrocious suggestions, nothing more than the natural and necessary results of Mr. Malthus’s theory! If it were true, as he states it to be,—that population, if left unrestrained, will inevitably outgrow the means of subsistence,—and that the danger is always imminent, of the appearance of more mouths than food can be found to supply,—*then*, unquestionably some such frightful regulations as he proposes, would indeed become necessary. It would be useless to struggle against the laws of human existence. The only question therefore is, *what are the laws of human existence?*

And Mr. Malthus’s criminality lay here,—that finding in the word of God, the only depository of perfect wisdom and perfect beneficence that we possess, a constant series of instructions of the most explicit and positive character, and bearing

* *Essay on Population*, 4to. p. 539.

directly against his whole theory,—his misconduct consisted in this, that in the face of all this infallible instruction, instead of distrusting his own information or his own conclusions, he boldly puts forth a system and a course of teaching, wholly opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture, and yet in itself resting upon the most preposterous blunders and the most groundless assumptions. Had his facts been as clearly established as the rotation of the earth, or the mortality of man, still a proper reverence for the word of the All-wise ought to have held his judgment suspended. Instead of which, with a flippancy which defies all just rebuke, and an heartlessness which none but an “economist” could exhibit, he thrusts upon the world his baseless theory, the inevitable results of which are, however concealed, that “the more excellent the laws, and the more strictly they are obeyed, mankind must the sooner become miserable!” *

The grand distinctive and opposing principles of the two systems, then, were these; on the part of Mr. Malthus’s system, *a fear of over-population*, as a danger necessarily connected with the laws of human existence. On the part of Mr. Sadler’s system, *an entire absence of all such fear*; brought

* *Wallace on the Various Prospects of Mankind*, iv. p. 111.

about by ascertaining from actual observation, the operation of balancing and compensating principles in the growth of the human race.

The natural and necessary result of the adoption of the one system, therefore, must obviously be an apprehension of falling into the error of too much benevolence,—of too much fostering the principle of human increase. The heart even of the kind and gentle, was taught by this system to school itself to self-denial, and to imagine that it was necessary that a considerable amount of misery and starvation should be allowed to exist, in order to prevent the poor from increasing too fast. To such an extent had this frightful impression been made upon Mr. Malthus himself, that we find in his work,—the work of a *clergyman*,—the following appalling sentiment. “A youth of eighteen would be as *completely justified* in indulging the sexual passion with every object capable of exciting it, as in following indiscriminately every impulse of his benevolence.”* “An aphorism concerning which,” remarks Mr. Sadler, “whether in reference to the age referred to, when the exercise of charity is so lovely, and open debauchery so disgustingly infamous; or as respects the consequences of these opposite courses at any

* *Essay on Population*, 4to. p. 559.

period of life,—as no language I have at command can sufficiently express my execration, I shall, therefore, not employ any!”

On the other hand, the results of the adoption of the opposite theory are just as consonant and agreeable to the best impulses of nature and conscience, as the inferences drawn from the Malthusian, are, to our basest and worst. Learning from actual investigation, that increase of numbers is, in fact, what Scripture always represents it to be, an actual blessing;—learning, also, that in place of any possibility of its proceeding too far, and outrunning the growth of food, it is, in all cases, the forerunner and efficient cause of abundance and comfort, and even luxury; the disciple of the paternal system dismisses all the selfish apprehensions of ultimate scarcity and want, and tunes his heart to the sweetest sympathies of our nature, and to a perfect harmony with those divine lessons which, if only adopted by all mankind, would restore to earth something resembling the bliss of paradise itself. To every impulse of benevolence, to every appeal of humanity, his ear is open, and his soul awake;—having first assured himself by the double testimony of Divine Truth, and established fact, that beneficence is not merely an allowable indulgence of personal feeling, but a wise, a prudent, and a reasonable line of conduct.

He reads the words of God: "Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him." "Thou shalt surely give him, *and thine heart shall not be grieved* when thou givest unto him." "For the poor shall never cease out of the land; therefore *I command thee*, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land," (Deut. xv. 7, 11.)—and he receives them with a willing mind. He is not perplexed,—as some good men who have been deceived by the fallacies of Mr. Malthus must often have been,—by a supposed disagreement between the word and the works of God. On the contrary, the juster view of the latter, which the discoveries of Mr. Sadler have given him, delights, instead of distressing his heart, and he rejoices to observe, in this, as in all other cases, how Natural Theology, when properly understood, casts a light even upon the more distinct instructions of the written word.

There has been, however, another question asked, with reference to Mr. Sadler's system; and one which demands a reply. It is inquired, Is there any thing *really new* in his theory? Did we not know, before he was born, that the open country, and the thinly-peopled districts, were more

favourable to the growth of population, than crowded cities or manufacturing towns? And what, after all, does his vaunted discovery amount to, beyond this?

Our reply to this inquiry divides itself into two observations. What Mr. Sadler effected towards the settlement of this great question, was, first, immensely to enlarge our knowledge of the subject, so as to bring the true principle, of which men had only, up to that period, been able to catch an occasional and imperfect glimpse, into full and open view. And *secondly*, to develope and apply that principle, so as to form what is rightly called a System; by which the opposing and most mischievous theory of Malthus, might be utterly swept away, and a generous and beneficent course of legislation be substituted for the selfish machinations of the Economists.

It is perfectly true that facts so notorious, as, that vices which warred against population, were more common in cities than in rural districts;—and that a country life, with frugality and industry, was favourable to the increase of the number of the people,—had not escaped the notice of former writers on this subject. But vague and general remarks of this kind left Mr. Malthus's principle unimpugned. He could well afford to admit their truth, and to reckon them

only as the exceptions to the universal rule. While the fact was supposed to extend no further than this, it could neither suffice as the foundation of a system, nor as the means for the overthrow of the theory most in fashion. Mr. Sadler's researches, however, entirely changed the complexion of the case. The isolated and apparently immaterial fact which had been previously observed, grew under his inquiries, into *a series* ; and this question was one, which, above all others, was ruled entirely by consecutive facts.

To prove, or rather to assert, what required no proof, that population increased less rapidly in towns than in the open country, left the main question untouched. It was asserted by Mr. Malthus that in the ordinary course of nature population doubled itself every twenty or five-and-twenty years ; while the means of subsistence could only be augmented at a far slower rate. This was the fundamental principle in his theory. Still, that the vices, the unhealthiness, and the misery which always exists in great towns, operated as a check to the dreaded growth of population, was also admitted and reckoned upon by him, as one of the established facts of the case.

But the investigations of Mr. Sadler entirely changed the position of the question. The distinguishing feature of his theory was, that it wholly

denied the doctrine of an *uniform* principle of increase ; and asserted, in opposition to it, the fact of a *varying* rate of increase ; such varying being generally in proportion to the greater or less populousness of the district in which it occurred.

The fact was established in a variety of ways. A few of the instances may be here adduced.

1. In England, there were two counties having less than 100 inhabitants to every square mile. In these two counties there were 420 births to every 100 marriages.

There were nine counties having more than 100, and less than 150, inhabitants to the mile. In these the births were only 396 to every 100 marriages.

There were sixteen, with more than 150 and less than 200 on the square mile. In these the births were 390 to 100 marriages.

All these were agricultural districts. The same principle of gradual diminution in proportion to increasing populousness, was shown to exist throughout all the rest of England ; but as the great manufacturing towns would mingle with the remaining counties, we prefer to stop at the first three divisions.

2. The islands in the British seas furnished a second and a very remarkable proof. The ten years from 1810 to 1820 shewed the following rate of increase.

	Inhab. on a mile.	Births to 100 marriages.
Isle of Wight	213	437
Isle of Man	250	433
Norman Isles	494	363

Here was a perfectly plain and simple proof, wholly free from all disturbing elements,—of manufactures, unhealthiness, or peculiar vice or necessity.

3. In examining the censuses of Ireland, Mr. Sadler tested his principle by a variation in the mode of proceeding. The parish registers not furnishing him, as in England, with the births, &c. he examined the proportion of children to adults, as supplied by the census, and the result was as follows :—

Twelve counties had less than 200 inhabitants to the square mile. In these, for every 10,000 people between the ages of fifteen and forty, there were, of children under ten years of age, 7275.

Fourteen counties had from 200 to 300 on the mile. In these, for every 10,000 between fifteen and forty there were, of children under ten, 7019.

Three counties had from 300 to 400 on the mile. The 10,000 adults were here accompanied by children, 6885.

Two counties had from 400 to 500, on the mile.

Here, to 10,000 adults, the children were only 6738.

Lastly, in the county of Dublin, the same class of children, for each 10,000 adults, were only 5254.

4. The census of America, constructed on a different principle, again forced Mr. Sadler into a different mode of investigation. He was here obliged to inquire, how many children under ten were found for each 100 females between sixteen and forty-five. The results were these:—

In the States having only <i>five</i> inhabitants on the square mile,—for each 100 females between 16 and 45, there were, of children under 10	-	216
In those having from 5 to 10 on the mile	-	200
In those having from 10 to 15	-	196
In those having from 15 to 20	-	181
In those having from 20 to 25	-	176
In those having from 25 to 30	-	163
In those having from 30 to 40	-	160
In those having from 40 to 50	-	144
In those having from 50 to 60	-	139
In those having above 60	-	135

5. Another fact of some importance concerning the diminishing rate of increase in England, was perceptible in the lessened fruitfulness of marriages, now, as compared with their productiveness when the kingdom had only half its present

number of inhabitants. From various authentic sources, referred to in his work, Mr. Sadler formed the following table.

Date.	Population.	Births to a marriage.
1680	5,500,000	4-65
1730	5,800,000	4-25
1770	7,500,000	3-61
1790	8,700,000	3-59
1805	10,678,500	3-50

We have selected these few, out of a multitude of proofs, as the most succinct and simple. But in the work itself a vast magazine may be found, entirely exhausting the subject, and proving, in every conceivable way, the fact, that the law of human increase operates in a *varying ratio*, having reference, always, to the density or thinness of the existing population ; and not in a *fixed ratio*, perpetually doubling and redoubling the existing race, and thus going on to excess and consequent misery.

But Mr. Sadler did not rest content with the statistic proofs of the reality of the principle he asserted. He called next upon physiology to lend its aid in the establishment of this great truth. And of each department of proofs it may safely be averred, that either would of itself have been sufficient to support his theory.

Mr. Malthus had propounded the doctrine that

the most efficient means of checking the growth of population, the overflow of which he represented as the greatest of evils, was, *simple starvation*. In considering the cause, why the same prodigious increase did not take place in England which he had *assumed* to be going on in America, he said, “The obvious reason to be assigned is, *the want of food*; which want is the *most efficient* cause of the three great checks to population.”*

In opposition to this doctrine Mr. Sadler alleged that the only efficient checks to population were, ease and comfort, increasing to luxury. Thus, while the one would have counselled the statesman, with a view to keep down the dreaded increase of their numbers, to limit, and if possible withdraw, all elymosynary aid;—the other would have replied, “If you really apprehend an overflow of this kind, the best way to check it, is to improve the condition of the people.

Mr. Sadler might very well appeal to notorious facts for the establishment of his principle; but his indefatigable spirit led him to fortify himself with a host of medical and physiological authorities; all asserting the fact, that poverty is favourable, rather than unfavourable, to fruitfulness; that the most laborious and the hardest-faring people are always the most prolific; and that it is

* *Essay on Population*, 4to. p. 340.

among those who begin to enjoy abundance and to live at ease, that barrenness first shews itself; increasing, as we advance upwards; till among the higher classes it is found that continual extinctions take place, and that it is only by perpetual drafts from the lower ranks, that their numbers can be preserved.

Thus Dr. Buchan remarks, that “a barren woman is seldom found among the labouring poor,” and adds, “would the rich use the same sort of food and exercise as the better sort of peasants, they would seldom have cause to envy their poor vassals the blessings of a numerous offspring.”† In like manner Adam Smith contrasts the extraordinary fruitfulness of the half-starved Highland woman with the sterility of the fine lady; and Dr. Short observes that “the poorest and most laborious part of mankind are ever the fruitfulest.”† But Dr. Perceval had furnished one striking instance from his own observation. In the parish of Dunmow, in Essex, there were 262 poor families, who had 460 children. There were also 116 families of the ranks above them, who had only 120 children; being little more than half the former proportion.‡ There can be little doub

* *Domestic Medicine*, p. 501. † *Short's Observations*, 144.

‡ *Perceval's Essays*, v. xi. p. 379.

that similar inquiries would furnish similar results, if generally extended.

Lastly, Mr. Sadler was also enabled to appeal to the voice of history ;—to the record of the universal experience of the human race.

In every part of the globe, man had been found at first, in a rude and savage, and almost in a solitary condition. The hunter of the woods roamed over boundless deserts, and amidst the undisturbed possession of whole provinces, fared hardly, and suffered all kinds of privation.

But as his household grew and multiplied, in that very multiplication we soon discern the cause of increasing civilization, prosperity, and comfort. The rural and agricultural life begins. Flocks and herds appear ; the fruits of the earth are cultivated and increase ; and quickly, instead of population outgrowing the means of subsistence, the means of subsistence are seen to outgrow population, and men become rich and luxurious.

Then arises the splendid city, the crowded mart ; and commerce begins to facilitate the exchange of productions and the growth of luxury. The savage had fed upon his roots, and the produce of his bow : the early agriculturist had provided bread, probably of a coarse description, and the flesh of the goat or wild sheep. But now “ the finest of the wheat flour,” “ the fatted calf,” “ the

juice of the grape," are in common use ; and where a few scattered hunters could hardly subsist, millions of people enjoy a succession of comfortable meals on each day that passes. And every where, be it especially remarked, the character and quantity of the people's food, *rises* with the increase of population. Roots for the savage ; black bread for the thinly-peopled country ; brown for the region possessing greater numbers ; but white for the crowded city.

And what is the history of the decline of nations ? According to Mr. Malthus, we might have expected to read of the mighty empires of old, as each falling a victim, by degrees, to increasing poverty ; to perpetually advancing misery ; and to the wild fury, at last, of a half-starved population, maddened by the want of food. But has such a circumstance ever yet occurred ? On the contrary, does not all history agree in a totally different story ? Has not each empire, in succession, fallen a victim, not to want, but to luxury ; not to an impossibility of obtaining food, but to the decay of industry, arising from wealth and enjoyment ; and to the decrease of population also, which quickly follows, as a necessary consequence, the growth of luxurious and vicious habits.

In every possible point of view, then, Mr. Malthus's theory stood convicted of fatal error. The

whole experience of the human race refuted it. The laws of human existence, the physiological principles by which the increase of the race was governed, with equal decision denied its possibility. And statistic facts, the most conclusive, when sufficiently extended, of all proofs, united in declaring, that the notion of a geometric rule of increase, constantly operating, and only checked by vice or "want of food," was a baseless fiction, and entirely at variance with the actual history of mankind's increase.

On the other hand, the same three branches of evidence all concurred in declaring the truth of the great principle first enunciated by Mr. Sadler, and of the system which he based upon it. History assured us that instead of a regular duplication of the human race at stated intervals, the rate of increase was always found to vary; being rapid in young and thinly-peopled countries, slower in those which were already populous, and declining into a positively retrograde movement, after it had passed a certain point of prosperity. Nor would history admit for an instant Mr. Malthus's hypothesis, that the practical check to growth of population consisted in a "want of food," seeing that its progress was always the most rapid in poor and ill-provisioned countries, and slower in those which had become rich and full of luxuries. Physiology

entirely concurred in this view ; assigning the most satisfactory reasons for the facts as they occurred ; and declaring that it must inevitably be found, that among the poor, the ill-fed, and the laborious, population would advance at a far more rapid rate than among those in easy or comfortable circumstances : While Statistics adduced the clearest proofs that in all places, and at all periods, that law had existed, and did exist, which Mr. Sadler had been the first to bring to light ; a law which so varies the ratio of human increase, as to produce great advances wherever the thinness of the population admits and requires such rapidity of growth, and then gradually diminishes and checks the ratio, by the natural causes of ease and luxury, till it soon falls to that point at which all further advance necessarily ceases.

And thus confirmed on every hand, the principle discovered by Mr. Sadler naturally grew into a system. That system we have already described as the Paternal one. Having wholly discarded the fear of “ a superabundant population,” the natural feelings of good-will and kindness were again allowed to flow forth. And more, they were encouraged and confirmed by the investigation which had taken place. It had now been ascertained in the fullest manner, that not an *abundance*, but a *paucity* of inhabitants, was the real evil to be apprehended ;

and that the words of God were indeed the words of truth, that “ In the multitude of people is the king’s honour ; but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.” *

Such was the theory of Human Increase of which Mr. Sadler was the first propounder. His work, the greatest effort of his life, and the greatest gift bestowed on mankind by any secular writer of modern times, appeared in the spring of the year 1830.

Its *reception*, externally, was immeasurably beneath its merits, but its *success* was complete. And it is very necessary, in this case, to discriminate between the two.

The book itself was overcharged with matter. More than thirteen hundred closely-printed pages, crowded with an hundred-and-four statistical tables, presented a task from which the great majority of readers would naturally shrink back. Even those journals which might have been expected to assist the progress of the work, declined to grapple with its prodigious mass of proofs. *Blackwood’s Magazine* devoted an article to the praise of a detached appendix, and the *Quarterly Review* suggested doubts as to the theory ; but neither of these works so much as attempted to

* *Proverbs* xiv. 28.

deal with the question,—whether or not the theory itself was established by proof?

The *Edinburgh Review*, on the other hand, lent itself to a mean and base attempt to show the proof to have failed;—mean and base, because it consisted in garbling and falsification. Mr. Sadler had given a view of *all* the counties of England, showing how fully they exhibited the operation of the principle for which he contended. Mr. Sadler's table was a complete one, suppressing nothing, and contriving nothing. The *Edinburgh Reviewer*, professing to give this table, first cut off one end of it, and then the other, and then, giving the middle only, so *contrived*, by an arbitrary distribution, as to get rid of the fact which stood in his way. Having thus, by mere mutilation, destroyed *one* of Mr. Sadler's hundred proofs, he coolly declared all the rest to be of like invalidity, and so evaded the force of the whole body of evidence ! *

Thus misrepresented on one hand, and faintly defended on the other, it was natural that the work, which from its ponderosity, required all the friendly aid that could be obtained, should make less rapid and visible progress, in taking possession of the public mind, than its predecessor. Never-

* See *Appendix* (C.)

theless its advance, though gradual, was not less certain. No one candid or unbiassed student have we ever been able to discover or hear of, who rose from its perusal without the most perfect conviction of its truth. Nor were testimonies to its value and importance wanting, even in the highest walks of literature and science. Mr. Sharon Turner, in his *Sacred History of the World*, thus alluded to it.

“It is this undiminishing and undecaying property in plants which may rescue us from that chimerical dread of a superabundant population of the earth, under which we have been labouring for the last thirty years, until Mr. Sadler’s tables, calculations, and reasonings, have at last rescued us from it. I allude to Mr. Sadler’s ‘*Law of Population*,’ which has thrown, at last, the steady and animating light of truth on a darkened and much-mistaken subject. A great mistake has been prevailing on this subject; the true law of nature was misconceived; partial effects were taken to be the general rule, and the real agency greatly overrated; and thereby an imaginary law has been assumed, which has never operated as has been alleged. In nature, the law of population has never exceeded that of the productive power of vegetable life, and never will.” *

* *Turner’s Sacred History*. Vol. I. p. 113, 114.

From an immense mass of epistolary congratulations we shall only stop to quote two or three. Sir John Sinclair acknowledges "the very great satisfaction" with which he has perused the work, and adds, that "never before had the subject been so thoroughly and profoundly investigated."

The venerable Dr. Storer of Nottingham, writes—"I cannot suppress the gratitude I owe, with the community in general, for one of the greatest benefits that could be conferred upon it."—"For, in a moral or political view, what can be a greater national benefit, than to fix the foundation of the whole system of political economy on its only sure and unerring basis ; a knowledge of that universal law, by which the increase of the human race is regulated, under all circumstances, and in every region of the habitable world." "I have really been upon my guard, and have read your work with all the jealousy of a disciple of the Malthusian school. My conclusion is, that the law of human increase which you have discovered and maintained, is a truth founded in nature. It may be assailed, but cannot be invalidated. All the facts already known, and applicable to the subject, coincide in demonstrating its truth. Further discussion will necessarily lead to a multitude of other facts bearing upon the question ; but such is its striking analogy to the other known

laws of nature, and such its admirable provision for all the various conditions in which society may be placed, that I feel a firm conviction, that a further accumulation of facts will confirm the principle which seems to me to be already established—and established on a basis as immoveable as Newton's demonstration of the Copernican system."

Dr. Storer adds, "I cannot forbear expressing my surprize at the extent and depth of research into which you have been led, in establishing this fundamental truth. If I did not know the contrary, I could have fancied that your life had been passed in your library."

Dr. Southey writes as follows—"You have demonstrated that Malthus's theory is as absurd, as the consequences to which it necessarily leads are execrable. And the proofs by which you have supported your own deductions, are as conclusive as they are surprizing. Part of its work this will do now, and hereafter the truth will be universally acknowledged : but for the present race of political economists, (who are the pests, and bid fair to be the ruin of the country,) they will not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead ! "

We must here add, what was overlooked in a former chapter, the testimony of the Bishop of Llandaff, Dr. Copleston, to Mr. Sadler's former

work. His Lordship, after apologizing for addressing Mr. S. says, “the great interest which your work on Ireland has excited in my mind, will not allow me to remain silent.” “You have triumphantly exposed the sophistry of Macculloch about absenteeism ; and your view of the evils of Ireland, and their appropriate remedies, appears to me admirable. Poor laws, and a tax on absenteeism, I have always thought the best, but I should have been quite unable to assign sufficient reasons, had I not read your book.”

The greatest triumph of Mr. Sadler’s work, however, consisted, in this case, as in the former, much less in the plaudits of friends, or the struggles and contentions of foes, than in the gradual but immediate and perceptible crumbling away of the rival system. The Malthusian theory received its death-wound on the day when Mr. Sadler’s work appeared ; its dying struggles were decently concealed by the mantle cast over them by its friends ; but the whole system has now passed away, and must be reckoned among the things that *were*. The silence which has been maintained, though it may have rendered the decease of the system an unobserved event in the minds of the multitude, cannot prevent us from comparing the ascendancy of Malthusianism in 1820—1830, with its utter oblivion in 1830—1840. We might apply to

it the expressive language of the Psalmist ;—“ *I sought for it, but lo, it could no where be found !*”

The sudden change which was wrought in the minds of the foremost defenders of the theory of Malthus was not quite imperceptible, though those parties naturally said as little as possible concerning their idol's fall. We find the *Edinburgh Review*, in March, 1824, speaking of the doctrines of Malthus as things established, and beyond doubt : “ It has been supposed by many, that the comparative density of the population of different countries afforded the best test of their condition ; and that those nations which had the greatest population must necessarily be the best governed, and the most prosperous and happy. But the examples of Ireland and the United States, and the principles unfolded in Mr. Malthus's work on population, have shewn the fallacy of this criterion ; and have indeed at length effected a complete change in the public opinion on this subject.”* A similar tone is preserved, even down to January 1830, when Mr. Malthus's book is styled an *invaluable* work.”†

In January, 1831, however, when Mr. Sadler's treatise had been published some months, and had had time to produce some results, a far different feeling is observable. Mr. Malthus's work is now

* *Edinburgh Review*. Vol. XL. p. 1. † *Ibid.* Vol. L. p. 352.

described as “incomplete,” and “one-sided,” and his famous “geometrical and arithmetical ratios,” the very pillars of his system, are said to constitute “a fruitful source of controversy and misconception.”*

In the same article praise is given to Mr. M'Culloch's “chapter on population,” “*modified as it now is.*” And very considerably “modified” had that chapter been! Mr. M'Culloch, in his first edition, had shewn himself a thorough-going Malthusian. But in his second edition, which the *Edinburgh Reviewer* had then under notice, and which was published *after* Mr. Sadler's unanswerable defence of the Poor Laws, in his work on Ireland, had appeared, Mr. M'Culloch's views were found to be so radically altered, as to lead him to insert,—what is most abhorrent to a Malthusian,—an elaborate argument in favour of a legal provision for the poor!

The legislative history, however, of the last fifteen years, if a rapid retrospect be taken of it, affords the best proof of the fact, that Malthusianism, once so paramount, must now to be reckoned among the things gone by.

During the period between 1820 and 1830, the poor laws of England seemed abandoned by all. On

* *Edinburgh Review*. Vol. LII. p. 342.

every side they were reviled ; on none, defended. The only question seemed to be, who should be their legislatorial executioner ? The government, what with the currency question, the Romish question, the free-trade question, and the ordinary duties of an executive, seemed to shrink from the task ; and individual members of parliament were every now and then offering their services to perform what seemed to be a duty alike recognized by all.

In 1821 a bill was introduced by Mr. Scarlett, carried through several stages, and only dropped at last on account of the approaching close of the session. This bill treated the existing law as altogether indefensible, and at once proposed to fix a maximum of amount to be raised, and to take away the right of relief in all but certain cases. The mover's language was, that " The effect of making an unlimited provision for the poor, it would appear, *a priori*, must be this, to operate as a premium for poverty, indolence, licentiousness, and immorality."

A year or two after, another bill was brought in, which seriously proposed to make every recipient of parochial relief, throughout the kingdom, wear a badge of disgrace, and a mark of criminality !

In 1827, Mr. Slaney introduced a measure which was also abandoned for want of time ; and which

would have enacted, almost literally, the Malthusian code. It proposed to take away, altogether, the general right of relief, and to permit assistance to be given only in certain cases. The theory and writings of Mr. Malthus were especially appealed to, in support of this measure.

In the following year the same gentleman offered a fresh proposition, which, however, he soon desisted from pressing.

Shortly after this, the writings of Mr. Sadler began to exercise an influence over the public mind ; and accordingly, while we hear no more of these propositions to take away the poor man's right of relief, we observe, when the government itself at last took up the question, a marked amelioration of tone.

Lord Althorpe, in 1834, when opening his plans for the amendment of the Poor Laws, alluded to the economists and their theories, only to disavow their opinions. He admitted that the ground he took was opposed to the principles of what was called " political economy ;" but he preferred being ruled by the ordinary feelings of humanity. And, accordingly, while there was much that was harsh and objectionable in his plan, there was still nothing of Malthusianism in it. No taking away or abridging the right of relief ; no badge of crime inflicted on the distressed ; but a distinct

adherence to the ancient law. We are not expressing a decided approval of the measure, when we admit or rather assert, that it was a very different one from what Mr. Malthus and his disciples would have counselled.

Such, then, has been the success of Mr. Sadler's greatest work; the most complete, — however imperceptible to a cursory view, — that could possibly be conceived. With far less of public applause than greeted and followed his treatise on Ireland, its effect on the mind and legislation of the country has been equally signal and triumphant. The one, in fact, carried the poor laws into Ireland; the other saved the poor laws of England; and both may be safely said to have exerted a more powerful influence on the bent, and purposes, and opinions of the English people, than any other productions of a similar class, during the present century.

A brief mention may here be made of a single circumstance, which may perhaps, to many minds, place the fact of the destruction of the Malthusian theory in a clearer point of view. We allude to the remarkable change in the marketable value of Mr. Malthus's work.

When Mr. Sadler first explained his theory, and produced his proofs, to the publisher of Mr. Malthus's work, the exclamation of the latter was,

—“Why, Sir, you are going to destroy a copy-right which cost me five hundred guineas!” And most fully and literally was this prediction fulfilled.

At the moment of the appearance of Mr. Sadler's treatise, in the commencement of 1830, the writer of these lines felt it desirable to compare the two systems together; and not having a very high opinion of Mr. Malthus's work, he sought for a copy at a cheaper rate than the usual price. But the reply was, that it was never to be had even a shade below the publication-price; and that second-hand copies, in sales, brought nearly the first cost when new.

Such was the market-value of the book, in the year 1830. In the year 1835—only five years afterwards, the publisher sold off the remainder of the edition, issued at 24*s*,—and the price he obtained for them was 5*s*. 9*d*. per copy!

Whether there exists a parallel case, of a work, previously considered to be of established fame, and yet thus utterly and almost instantly destroyed by an opposing theory, we are unable to say.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SESSION OF 1830—MOTION FOR POOR LAWS IN
IRELAND—DISSOLUTION—NEW PARLIAMENT.

MR. SADLER'S attendance on his parliamentary duty in the spring of 1830 was unremitting. We find his name in the debate on the address, Feb. 5. and on various other occasions in March, April, and May.

But his mind now began to turn upon the best method of introducing to parliament those plans which constantly occupied his thoughts, and the prospect of bringing which under the attention of the legislature, had ever constituted his chief motive for entering into public life. The regeneration of the industrious classes of the empire, required, he deeply felt, a series of remedial measures ; but mature reflection convinced him that the first in order must be, the equalization of Ireland with England, in the matter of a national provision for the indigent poor. On the 3d of June, therefore, pursuant to notice given, he moved the following wise and temperate resolution,—a resolu-

tion which, in the course of the last two years, we have seen carried into full effect, by a positive enactment, solemnly agreed to by large and triumphant majorities in both houses—

“Resolved, that it is the opinion of this House, that the establishment of a system of poor laws in Ireland, on the principle of that of the 43d of Queen Elizabeth, with such alterations and improvements as the course of time, and the difference in the circumstances of England and Ireland may require,—is expedient and necessary to the welfare of the people of both countries.”

The speech in which Mr. Sadler proposed this resolution, and thus opened in parliament the first of his plans for the improvement of the condition of the industrious classes, seems to us a model of its kind. Its restricted extent, occupying in delivery little more than an hour, shewed that nothing was wasted on useless ornament or verbiage. The tone and general character of the composition is grave, earnest, and argumentative ; and wholly free from what constituted the speaker's besetting temptation, a tendency to the florid and the overwrought. And the substance of the address, its statements and reasonings, constituted a demonstration of the undeniable justice and urgent necessity of his proposition, which set all reply at defiance, and to which, in fact, none was attempted.

His opening observation was explanatory of his motive for placing this question in the foreground of all his plans for the amelioration of the condition of the labouring poor. The same consideration was also well calculated to arrest the attention of the British legislature. The subject was propounded as an English and a Scotch question ; not at all as an Irish one exclusively.

“The first argument, then, which I shall advance in behalf of this proposition, is founded on the absolute necessity of such a provision, as regards the labouring classes of *England*. Much has been said of late concerning the necessity of assimilating as closely as possible the institutions of the two Islands ; the necessity of so doing, in this respect, is abundantly apparent. The Union has not only identified the legislatures of the two countries, but has given far greater facilities to their mutual intercourse ; and still more closely even than that great measure, have the invention and extensive adoption of steam-navigation united them, and placed them, indeed, in point of practical effect, in closer contact than, for instance, are the great and populous northern counties, with this the metropolitan one—rendering the international communication, as respects the mass of the community, more easy, cheap, and rapid. The effects are abundantly plain, and in the present

state of things irremediable. The institution of the Poor Law of England encourages the demand for, and increases the value of labour, as well as abates distress ; in Ireland, in consequence of the want of such a law, labour is discouraged, and distress increased. The inevitable result is—the constant influx of numbers from the latter country, which nothing but a better and uniform system will ever prevent.

“ Other circumstances also conspire to make this defect a still greater evil. If we consider the necessary consequences of Irish absenteeism, and the great extent to which it is unhappily carried ; the want of labour, exorbitant rents, and the ruinous and oppressive system of underletting, to which it gives rise ; if to these evils are added the clearing of farms, and driving forth the inhabitants at the pleasure of those who are thus invested virtually, though not ostensibly, with the power of life and death, and who are the means too frequently of occasioning the latter ; if we also recollect that steam navigation has, by facilitating the cheap and speedy export of cattle, been another cause of that increase in the size of farms, and comparative diminution in the tillage of the country, which has dispossessed so many little farmers and their labourers of their employment and their homes ; I say, if we take into conside-

ration these and other distressing facts, we are no longer at a loss to account for that mass of misery which is in constant existence, and which it is difficult to overrate or describe. Numerous little cultivators, who, notwithstanding the parsimony of living to which they submit, are barely enabled to sustain life, are deprived of their last shilling, and sent forth at once, without the slightest provision, upon a country which yields them no employment, and affords them no relief. Whither can they direct their course? Many who can proceed so far, find “a distant home beyond the western main;”—more still repair to this country, where they overstock the market of labour, and occasion in no inconsiderable degree that distress under which our industrious population now suffers. Such, then, are the undeniable consequences of the want of a provision for the poor of Ireland similar to that of this country. The case would be precisely the same in England, were the poor in one half of it adequately provided for, and were they in the other left totally destitute. The indigent in the latter part would most certainly take refuge in the former, even though not entitled to direct relief, in order to share in the general advantages which must ever result from such a system. The Irish do so, and in increasing multitudes—nor do I blame them. I condemn

those who refuse them in their own country that relief in their distresses which justice and humanity equally dictate, and which is rendered in every other civilized nation upon earth. Thus is it that the want of a legal provision for the poor of Ireland operates as a grievous injury on those of England. The proprietors in the former island, being under no obligation to sustain the unemployed, the destitute, and the distressed, have an interested and selfish motive, which may indeed be denominated a premium, for thus getting rid of them and driving them forth to utter destitution, when many of them necessarily take refuge here. They come for employment and for bread. The market of labour here is consequently overstocked, and its value greatly depressed by the unnatural rivalry of those numbers who are annually obliged to make this country their asylum. Thus it is that in the field and in the factory, at the forge or at the loom,—in every sphere of industry, the Englishman finds himself interfered with, his wages greatly reduced, and himself in many cases thrown out of employment. The poor creatures who take refuge here, I repeat, I do not blame; absenteeism has deprived them of the means of subsistence, and, in effect, expelled them from the country. I would therefore receive and relieve them till a better system

is established. In the mean time, however, I cannot refrain from reprobating in the strongest terms the conduct of those who cause these constant deportations. The interests of our own poor imperiously demand that those of Ireland should be sustained; nor are their interests alone concerned; so great and general have the evils to which I have referred become, that it will, I think, be found ere long, that the rights of property, as well as those of poverty, will alike prescribe the same remedy; and then indeed may the poor of Ireland confidently hope for redress."

But from this secondary, though urgent argument, the speaker proceeded at once to the higher ground of a *claim of right*; asserting without hesitation, but at the same time defining with the greatest accuracy, what he felt to be the just claims of the poor.

"I approach," he says, "the argument with the greater confidence of success, from having observed that the ground of all the several propositions which have been lately submitted to this House, and some of them adopted, has been simply that of justice,—alterations of the most momentous nature, with some of which I had the misfortune not to concur; others of a like kind, which are still, it appears, contemplated: changes affecting, I may say revolutionizing, many insti-

tutions which had long been held sacred, have been all supported by the simple argument of justice. No matter how ancient was the principle to be attacked ; no matter how deeply-rooted the prejudices which were to be encountered ; no matter how nearly individual interests might appear to be touched ; all these, it was, and still is agreed, ought certainly to give way to the principle of human rights—to the undoubted claims of justice. I hail these appeals, however I may differ sometimes as to their application ; I hail them more especially as regards my present motion, which is one, the justice of which is perhaps more apparent and demonstrable, however considered, than any abstract legislative proposition ever entertained. And if to justice be added another plea, hardly less sacred, certainly not less touching,—that of mercy, I cannot but think that it must be successful : that it will prevail on this occasion, I cherish the strongest hopes ; but that it will be finally triumphant, I am fully certain. A measure which is equally dictated by the principles of reason, and the feelings of humanity ; by the institutions of civilization, and the rights and interests of society at large ; which has been sanctioned by the highest authorities that have ever existed, and adopted by every civilized country upon earth, cannot be withheld from that one

island which, though forming an integral part of the richest empire in the world, stands forth as one of the most striking examples of misery which Europe presents ; and in which, therefore, a national system of charity is the most essentially necessary. Before touching, however, upon this right of poverty, it may be proper to define what is meant by it. It is not put forth on behalf of the poor, as a right to a division of any part of the real property of the country ; on the contrary, it is one urged in perfect consistency with all the just claims of property, however rigidly maintained, and by whomsoever expounded ; it simply implies, a real and indisputable right, that, after the institutions of the country have sanctioned the monopoly of property, the poor shall have some reserved claims to the necessities of life ; and that these claims shall be available in the case of those only who may be smitten with sickness, and consequently incapable of labour ; disabled by age or incurable disease, and who can therefore labour no more ; of that infancy which, left parentless and destitute, makes so touching a demand upon our care ; of that state of wretchedness, so common in Ireland, owing to causes to which I have already alluded, when those who are most willing, and even anxious to work, can nevertheless obtain no employment : that these should be re-

lieved in some humble degree, so confined, if you please, and limited, that the right thus recognised shall make but a small inroad on the amount of that wealth which shall be called upon to administer to these necessities; nay, on the contrary, when duly understood, should actually increase its advantages. Finally, that all assistance should be administered in the form of remunerated labour, wherever the applicants are capable of it, to those who are willing and anxious to earn their humble pittance by the sweat of their brow. Such, then, are the narrow limitations of the right we assert in behalf of human indigence;—the bare right of existence.”

Having thus stated the principle, he naturally deals, in the next place, with its impugners.

“ But, Sir, it forms a distressing feature in some of the systems now promulgated, that this right, which for a succession of centuries has never been denied, now begins to be disputed. It lies at the foundation, however, of my proposition, and as such I shall attempt to uphold it; not indeed by any abstract arguments of my own, but by the unanimous reasonings and declarations of the highest authorities that ever existed in the world, which I shall give in their own language. In doing this I shall not allude to the institutions of the legislators of the free states of antiquity, those of

Greece and Rome, all of which it is well known recognised the right of their citizens to legal relief, and in a way so highly eulogized by many of their philosophers ; nor shall I draw an argument at present from the still more liberal and far more imperative and direct institutions of Moses. I shall not appeal to the authority of the primitive church before it was legally established, nor to its laws when it became dominant, in favour of this right ; it may suffice to state that it was acknowledged and enforced by all these, and by every argument, drawn from whatever source, human or divine. I will rather prove my position by the reasonings of those who have studied, in later times, the rights of mankind, and to whose exposition of them the world continues to appeal ; only selecting, however, a very few of these, but those few of such an order as that numbers could add nothing to the weight and importance of their authority."

He then adduces the judgment of Grotius, Pufendorf, Montesqueui, Locke, Blackstone, and Paley, and alludes to others,—as Tillotson, Butler, Bacon, Hale, and others, whom time forbade him to quote ; and proceeds in the next place, to brush away some of the follies of modern writers,—such as, that the provision for the poor ought to be optional,—ought to be left to the

voluntary system ;—that the poor ought to be taught frugality, and be obliged to provide for their own necessities by savings'-banks! &c. Having disposed of these puerilities, he returns to the main question, and proceeds to shew, that as all statists and philosophers of the least reputation have asserted these rights, so all civilized countries have recognized and provided for them. Having adverted to ancient history, he proceeds ;

“ Can there be a doubt whether Christianity weakened the obligation to make a certain and adequate provision for the poor—that religion of which a writer so eloquently alluded to the other evening, Bolingbroke, said, “ that charity was its very boast ! ” Wherever that religion has spread, there have legal institutions in behalf of poverty prevailed. In some of its forms it may be doubted whether the provision has not been carried to a culpable excess, increasing and perpetuating, by actual and permanent temptations to idleness and improvidence, that poverty it was intended only to relieve. History informs us how early a Poor Law was introduced amongst ourselves. It was established by the father of our monarchy, and the founder of our liberties—Alfred. He ordained, as one of our earliest law-books informs us, that the poor should be sustained by the parsons and inhabitants of the parishes, so that none should

die for want of sustenance ; a provision substantially the same as that which is now happily established amongst us. In all the Catholic countries of Europe we know the extent and splendour of the endowments for the poor. In the Protestant ones, another, and I think, [a preferable, system prevails, namely, a direct Poor Law, which connects moral superintendence with charitable relief. This is the case, for instance, in Switzerland ; in Sweden ; in Denmark ; in Norway. Even Iceland, poor as she is, is not too poor to have a law for the relief of the indigent. Holland, it need not be said, had very early in its history the same institution, and has long been a pattern to the world for the exemplary manner in which the poor are there sustained. In the Netherlands there is a similar law in full operation. In France, where the spoliation of the Revolution ruined so many of the rich, and seized also upon the funds set apart for poverty and distress, the public revenue is beginning to be disbursed for the relief of indigence, and a regular system is gaining ground throughout the country. In the New World also, where we had been taught by some to suppose that no poor, nor laws for their relief, existed, we know, on the contrary, that the most liberal and efficient system of legal charity ever established is in full operation, involving, as far as our information

hitherto extends, an expense to which even England is a stranger. Thus, for instance, the poor of the city of New York cost the public not far short of 200,000 dollars annually, and those of Philadelphia upwards of 100,000; sums which strike us as surprisingly large when we consider the cheapness of provisions and the great demand for, and high price of, labour, and what vast tracts of uncultivated land of the most fertile description are every where found. In proof of the liberality with which our transatlantic brethren sustain their poor, Dr. Dwight may be appealed to, or Warden, who estimates the annual cost of their paupers as amounting to forty-five dollars each.

“I might extend these proofs of the universality of a national provision for the poor even beyond the limits of Christendom. It exists in the East, and especially in the Mahomedan countries; nay, even in China, where, notwithstanding the present age has in extreme simplicity supposed the population to be so excessive as to render it necessary for the people to kill their children, and to eat almost any thing but each other from sheer want,—in China, Sir, there are Poor Laws, perfectly adapted to the condition and habits of the country, in full operation, and carried to an extent unknown in the western world, affording a direct provision to all beyond a certain and not

very advanced age, and prescribing that lands shall be awarded on advantageous terms to those who want employment and subsistence; an institution to which, perhaps, the unrivalled perfection of their minute cultivation, while that on a large scale is confessedly so contemptible, may be fairly attributed. Whichever way we turn, therefore, we see a system of national charity completely established, except in one country, and that country is found, unhappily, in our own European empire; and, still more lamentable is the fact, in that part of it where such an institution is more than in any other indispensably necessary. But I shall not dwell further upon these instances,—though embodying as they do the feelings, principles, and experience of mankind in all ages and countries of the world, they are of the highest importance to the argument. It is enough to have simply appealed to the fact, that in almost every country under the sun where the rights of human beings are at all recognised, and where the public institutions are professedly founded upon them, there is a legal provision made for poverty, which is the more efficient the further such nations may be advanced in knowledge and character. So true is the observation of our great moralist, Dr. Johnson,—‘A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization.’ ”

He then, at some length, proceeds to demonstrate the peculiar claims of Ireland to be thus “civilized,” and to trace the greater proportion of her sufferings and miseries to the want of such a legal provision, and concludes this branch of the subject as follows ;

“Yes, Sir, notwithstanding the repeated and confident assertions to the contrary, there is not in the world a sphere where human labour might be more beneficially employed : whether on the millions of uncultivated acres, now wholly unproductive, or on those which, though cultivated, are not, with reference to their potential productiveness, half tilled ; or in those inexhaustible mines of wealth beneath the fertile surface, hitherto almost wholly unexplored—in many of the noble rivers of the island,—on all its shores,—and surrounding these, in those wastes of the ocean which offer their supplies with unfailing certainty, and in quantities literally inexhaustible,—means, Sir, of profitable employment arise in every direction ; of employment, which would at once advance the people in all the arts of civilization ; invest the country with additional health and beauty, and crown it with increasing plenty. Strange that while nature herself thus solicits us to engage in those magnificent tasks which await future generations, it should be the present policy

to slight the means by which they can alone be accomplished,—human beings ; to pronounce these redundant in numbers, and expel them from the country on pain of starving them in it !

“ Under all these circumstances, then, and after mature consideration, I have arrived at the conclusion that not only is a legal provision for the poor in Ireland the most just and necessary, but that it would also be the most beneficial, of all national measures. It would discourage idleness ; it would raise the value of labour, now so distressingly low ; it would promote economy and dispense comfort ; it would ensure peace—nay it would diminish the expenditure, as well as the suffering and destitution of the country ; it would not only be a blessing to the poor, but a boon to the benevolent, by compelling those who are the main cause of creating and aggravating the general distress,—the absentees,—to contribute to its relief ; in one word, it would equally advantage every class of society, the benefactors and the benefited ; and, in the literal meaning of the term, it would be that mercy which is ‘ twice blessed, which blesseth him who gives and him who takes.’ ”

He then left the question in the hands of the House, in the following appeal :

“ Sir, the poor of Ireland are this night at the bar of the Imperial Parliament. Many of the

more fortunate of their fellow-countrymen already acknowledge their claims, and are most anxious to concede them. The interests of the nation demand a concession of those humble rights which have been already recognized in every civilized country upon earth. An act of mercy and justice can never be contrary to true policy ; and this, more especially, is one which conscience dictates, and the public voice demands ; and which, sooner or later, must therefore be conceded, even if now refused. May we better consult what is due to our character, to our constituents, and to our country, and not record our verdict against justice and mercy, because they are found in the garb of poverty and distress. If I could bring before the most callous and persevering opponents of this measure who now hear me, those wretched objects who so loudly claim our consideration and relief ; if I could bid them,

“ Come like shadows, so depart

Show their eyes, and grieve their heart—”

then, Sir, I am sure their claims would be instantly acknowledged ; and, more than this, if it were possible, by an act of prescience, to look into futurity, and to summon forth those miserable victims of suffering and poverty, which the further withholding of so just and necessary a law will as

surely consign to their melancholy fate, as the want of it has already so often done in times past ; if we could know the sorrow, destitution, and death, that will be the inevitable result of our longer neglect, and depict the deeper anguish and long-suffering which the more wretched survivors will have to endure, then, Sir, could any man that bears the human form hesitate as to his vote on this occasion ? And, Sir, if ours cannot, there is an eye that does foresee these sufferings, and a Being that will record them—a Being who will not hold him guiltless, who, seeing his brother have need, and knowing that he will require assistance, shutteth up his bowels of compassion against him ; and all from a deep and doubtful speculation, founded, as I contend, upon the grossest error and delusion, that the measure proposed may possibly somewhat diminish the revenue of the more affluent part of the community. Sir, I hope better things of this Parliament, whose days we know but too well are few and numbered. May it illustrate its remaining span by an act of mercy, which shall immortalize this session, and render it, in one of its terminating deeds, worthy the gratitude and admiration of the country, and the applauding remembrance of posterity ! ”

Such was the opening of this great question in Parliament. Nothing beyond the statement of the case, could of course be looked for on this occasion. Denounced, as the very idea had been for years past, as preposterous, ruinous, and almost treasonable, it was much to gain a patient hearing for a serious argument in its favor. No division took place ; the Government not acceding to the proposition, it passed in the negative. But the blow had been struck, and the question was, in effect, carried. An unanswerable argument had been laid before the British Parliament, and through it, before the British people. The result was certain, its accomplishment was only a question of time. This was confessed, in a single twelvemonth after, by Mr. Secretary Stanley, who, in once more opposing, in 1831, Mr. Sadler's renewed motion, said, that " He could not conclude without expressing his persuasion, that an opinion in favor of Poor Laws was every day gaining ground in Ireland ; and that to an extent which no government could, or ought much longer to oppose."

At the end of this month, (June) the death of George IV. terminated the existing Parliament, and Mr. Sadler proceeded to Newark, for which borough he was again returned, on the 6th of

August, after another fruitless opposition on the part of Sergeant Wilde.

Immediately after his re-election, Mr. Sadler joined his family at Redcar, where he passed the next three months.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SESSION OF 1830-31.—THE REFORM BILL.

THE first Parliament of William IV. opened on the 26th of October, 1830, and Mr. Sadler was, as usual, present in his place.

Apart from the two great sections of the House of Commons,—the ministerial and opposition,—that session shewed a third division, as completely organized and prepared for action as either of the other two. Those earnest and conscientious opposers of Romish ascendancy, who had felt deeply aggrieved by the conduct of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, in adopting the Relief Bill urged upon them by their opponents, found their numbers increased by the recent elections ; while their wrongs remained unatoned, and their feelings of hostility unappeased. They began, therefore, to draw together in closer bonds than heretofore, and to wait for the moment when it might be in their power to punish those recreant

friends, whom they considered to have betrayed the Commonwealth. That desired opportunity was not long postponed.

On the 15th of November, Sir Henry Parnell made his attack on the ministerial proposition for the Civil List of the new reign ; when the “ country party,” as they were termed, joined the opposition with all their forces ; the cabinet suffered a defeat by a vote of 233 against 204 ;—and the next day declared itself dissolved, by the resignation of the whole administration. The King immediately called upon Lord Grey to form a government, and after a brief and hurried session of a few weeks, the House of Commons broke up, to meet again in the ensuing February.

For the support of Sir Henry Parnell’s motion, and consequent overthrow of the Duke of Wellington’s administration, “ the country party,” with whom Mr. Sadler acted, have often been visited with severe reproach. It therefore becomes our duty, in narrating these circumstances, to consider, for a few moments, the question of, upon whom the blame of destroying that Ministry, and “ letting in the Whigs,” ought in justice to rest. After the fullest consideration we can give the subject, we are compelled to declare, that in our view, the blame of that whole catastrophe must rest upon the administration itself, and upon it alone.

In the first place it is undeniable, that the highest degree of provocation had been given ; and that, as far as party ties and obligations were concerned, the sincere Protestants in Parliament had been fully released from all bonds to the Wellington administration. It is also perfectly clear, that the responsibility for their votes, attaching to a ministry, as such, and to a number of independent members of Parliament, is very different in kind and degree. The one class is bound to consider every probable and even possible consequence which may arise out of a vote,—the other needs only to look to the honesty of the vote itself. An “unattached” member may without hesitation assist in the overthrow of what he considers a bad government ; leaving to others the question, of how that government is to be replaced. Even if, contrary to any expectations he could rationally form,—a still worse should succeed, and if that worse administration should descend to crimes of which he could have formed no anticipation,—his vote, given in sincerity, simply for the removal of a Cabinet in which he could place no confidence, remains morally unimpeachable.

But let us take a larger view. The real cause of the fall of the administration of 1829-30, is not to be found in a casual vote upon the Civil

List. Nor is it just to its opponents to charge that dissolution upon *them*, which its *own* innate weakness rendered certain, even without their hostile movement. That Cabinet fell, because by its conduct during those two years, it had alienated in turn, *both* the great parties in the country, and stood, now,—or rather attempted to stand,—*without any popular support whatever!*

There are, were, always have been, and always will be, two great parties in England, — the Conservative, and the Progressive. All who take any active part in politics must range themselves under one of these two banners. The one embodies those who fear change more than they desire improvement: — the other, those who desire improvement more than they tremble at change. The first class properly appreciates the high state of liberty, security, civilization and happiness, at which England has already arrived; and consequently looks with some apprehension on propositions, which, it is feared, by tending to fundamental changes, would endanger all these blessings. The other, inclined somewhat to undervalue the benefits already realized, is ever reaching forward with eagerness to some further attainment. Both these principles of action are necessary to our political well-being. Without the check interposed by the first, the “move-

ment party " would urge the machine of the state so rapidly forward as to endanger its very existence ;—without the progression induced by the second, society would soon stagnate into utter corruption. A truly desirable government would rest upon the first, and borrow life and energy from the second.

Now such had been the ill luck, or rather the fatuity of the Wellington administration, that it had contrived, within the short space of less than two years, to quarrel irremediably with *both* these great parties ; and it consequently found itself depending, in Nov. 1830, solely upon mere official and family connection. In Parliament it had not a majority ; out of Parliament it had not a single disinterested friend.

The Cabinet had first contrived to offend, most needlessly and most absurdly, all the best and most conscientious portion of its own supporters. The Tory party was necessarily made up, as all large bodies must be, of some men thoroughly honest, and some only conventionally so ;—of some who were led by prejudice, or habit, or long-established party connection ; and of others who acted from deeply-rooted principle and conviction.

Now the bulk of those who ought to have been the most cherished and honoured,—the Tories from principle and conviction,—were united in one

opinion, that the exclusion of the vassals of Rome from power, was necessary to the preservation of the liberties of England. Nor was this a mere idle bugbear, or woman's fear; picked up no one knew how. It was the settled judgment of the authors and restorers of liberty in England, the men of the Reformation, and the men of the Revolution;—it was the conviction of Milton, of Russell, and of Locke; the firm resolve of Somers and of Sydney.

Now this settled principle of Toryism, rooted deeply in the minds,—with some few exceptions,—of all who most deserved honor and esteem among their own supporters,—the Wellington administration decided to set at nought. And set at nought it was, in the most insulting and irrational way possible. Without any previous consultation or discussion, and without even the pretence of a conversion to the contrary principle, the honest supporters of the Cabinet received a sudden call to abandon all their old professions and principles; and this, not in deference to superior reason or argument, nor even in unwilling obedience to some fancied state-necessity; but merely because it seemed to their official leaders to be most *expedient*!

And this “expediency,” about which so much was said, and upon which the whole question

was made to turn, resolved itself into nothing more than this,—that the leader of the house of Commons did not like, once a year, to be left in a minority of 2, or of 5 ! even upon a question called an “open one.” And the result of yielding to the dictates of this said expediency, was, that in less than two years from that time, he was left in a minority of 29, upon a question vital to his ministry ; and was forced to resign his office ! In 1828, resisting the Papal encroachments, his government seemed so strong that none could have ventured to assign a term to its existence ; in 1830, having yielded to Rome, he found himself like Samson shorn of his locks ; and fell, not again to arise until years had passed away in vain resistance to the evil spirit which he himself had unbound.

However, by this first false step, his own party had been broken up, and all the most honorable and conscientious members of it, thoroughly alienated. The apparent gain, which, for the moment, seemed to counterpoise this loss, was the adhesion of the Whig opposition, who looked upon the Cabinet as converts to their own principles, and for a short period yielded them a delusive support. And thus, in the false position, of being abhorred by their friends, and sustained by their

enemies, the Ministry stumbled through an uneasy dream of a few short months.

This unnatural state of things could not have long continued to exist; but its inevitable termination was accelerated by a second blunder, in extent and in folly nearly equalling the first. The Whigs had embraced the recreant Tories, as newly-converted adherents to the Progressive principle. They expected, and naturally and reasonably expected, that having taken the greatest and most hazardous step in the path of what was called "Reform," the neophytes would proceed boldly in the course on which they had so undauntedly entered. "This was looked for,"—and very reasonably looked for, "and this was balked."

The Administration had committed one grand error, in yielding to a demand which principle contemned, and only a supposed expediency counselled. They now fell into a still greater; in refusing a claim to which no principle was opposed, and which a real and genuine expediency prescribed. They had earned their ruin by a want of steadiness; they were now to complete that ruin by an exhibition of irrational tenacity.

There were boroughs in England,—and not one or two merely, but several,—in which, notoriously and beyond all doubt, the constituencies

had become so universally corrupt, as to be purchasable, *en masse*, at every election. Nothing could be clearer than that no principle whatever could be violated by at once depriving these guilty bodies of a right, which they only held as trustees for the public at large, and yet had abused to the sole and selfish promotion of their own private emolument.

There were also several large towns, which had risen into wealth and importance since the last settlement of the electoral system, and which consequently were entirely omitted in the existing scheme of representation. The inhabitants of these towns were naturally discontented at their continued exclusion from the full benefits of the Constitution; and the bulk of the people throughout England sympathized in their complaints, and earnestly desired their enfranchisement. Here, then, was an instance in which expediency might lawfully, nay, ought solely, to have dictated a course. Whenever Principle speaks, Expediency has only to be silent; but where Principle interposes not, there a just Expediency is the rightful guide. Now in this case Principle could oppose no objection to the disfranchisement called for, nor yet to the enfranchisement claimed. Expediency, therefore, ought to have been consulted, and that Expediency

would have counselled an immediate concession of these claims.

No one, now, entertains the least doubt, that the suppression of ten corrupt boroughs, and the enfranchisement of ten of the large unrepresented towns, would have been a truly Expedient measure. It would have satisfied the public; would have given the Administration that popular character and support which it greatly needed,—would have rendered it impossible for the Whigs to have rallied their forces for an attack, and would thus have prevented the trial of that tremendous experiment,—the Reform Bill. But the boon was refused. Expediency, which had been listened to in 1829, when its voice, in opposition to Principle, ought not to have obtained the least attention, was now, in a case peculiarly its own, roughly spurned; and an open declaration of the perfection of that system which the whole country knew to be stained with imperfection, was hastily volunteered. Having driven away the *élite* of the Conservative party, by the abandonment of Protestantism in 1829; the Ministry now broke off all connexion with its later friends of the Progressive opinion, by its unnecessary denunciation of all Reform. And it lost its present supporters, without gaining back its former ones. Many of the most honest and decided of the Conservative party

had already declared in favour of some degree of Reform. Thus the Cabinet had contrived to be in each case thoroughly in the wrong. First yielding where it ought to have been firm as a rock;—then, standing firm when it ought to have yielded.

To render the error complete, the Ministry so managed matters as not only to alienate and offend by turns the two great parties in the State; but also in each case to array itself in opposition to that third, not very definite, but certainly very important body,—the non-political mass of the middle orders.

This is a power which no wise or prudent statesman will ever leave out of his calculation. It includes that immense body of the middle classes, who, disliking extremes, and discerning some truth in both the Conservative and Progressive principles,—refrain from committing themselves decidedly on either part, and are therefore ready, in the agitation of any great question, to reinforce and give a decided preponderance to that party which seems to have the best of the argument.

Mr. Sydney Smith says, in one of his lively epistles, “I am astonished that these Ministers neglect the common precaution of a foolometer, with which no public man should be unprovided :

I mean, the acquaintance and society of three or four regular British fools, as a test of public opinion. Every Cabinet Minister should judge of all his measures by his foolometer, as a navigator crowds or shortens sail by the barometer in his cabin."

Now every one can see that Mr. Smith here applies the strong term of "folly," with his accustomed vivacity or extravagance, to the mere absence of decided political principle, and the consequent subjection to prejudice and impression. He would not deliberately assert of the "public opinion" of England, that "a fool" would be its best or only representative. But he thus describes with his usual jocularly, that great body of the middle classes, who refuse to follow, at all hazards, this or that political leader; and who hold themselves prepared to judge of each proposition of the government, according to the momentary impression it makes upon their own minds.

It is dangerous, as Mr. Smith observes, for a statesman to disregard, even once, this floating mass of unfixed opinion; and to present to it some scheme which shall instantly array its whole power against his system. It is hazardous even to make a single experiment of this kind, but a second is almost necessarily fatal; and so the Wellington administration found it. The first

error, that of concession to the Romanists, fixed a feeling of disgust and alienation in the popular mind; and out of this feeling grew a more lively wish than had previously existed, for some kind of Parliamentary Reform. Then, just when this feeling was about to exhibit itself, in the session of 1830, came the declaration of the head of the Administration, against all kinds and degrees of Reform; and from that moment the Cabinet stood, as we have before described it,—utterly destitute of all popular support.

It is idle, therefore, at this time of day, to cast upon “the country party” of Nov. 1830, the blame of all that has occurred in consequence of that vote. The results of the course then taken were not foreseen,—they could not have been foreseen,—by any party. The depths of disgrace to which the Whigs have shewn themselves willing to descend, the perils to which they have proved themselves to be ready to expose the country, so that, by any means, honest or dishonest, office might be gained or retained, it was impossible, beforehand, to calculate upon. The question then before the House of Commons resolved itself, in fact, into a vote of confidence in the existing administration. To have absented themselves, *en masse*, would have been cowardly,—to have given a vote of confidence would have been to

express a sentiment of trust and approbation which they did not feel ;—what, therefore, could the country party do, but vote as they did,—with Sir Henry Parnell ? Nor is it rational to attribute to that single vote, the whole destruction of the Ministry. That Ministry, as we have already seen, was fated to dissolution, by causes innate to itself. No single friendly or unfriendly vote could have prevented this its inevitable wreck. Neither in the country nor in the House had it a majority. How, then, was it possible for its existence to have been prolonged ?

Enough, however, has been said on this subject. We feel that in acting with that phalanx of honorable and conscientious men who resolved by their votes to express their want of confidence in the authors of the Romish-Relief Bill, Mr. Sadler, however he might afterwards have had occasion to regret the unforeseen results,—at least affixed no stain to his own memory. That vote was as pure and as justifiable a vote as ever was given ; and for its consequences, those who had alienated their own friends, and divided their own party, are the persons who ought to be held mainly responsible.

We pass on, then, to the entirely altered state of things which commenced with the re-opening of Parliament in February 1831. Mr. Sadler was

again punctual in his attendance, and spoke on the 7th of February, and on the 15th of March, on questions connected with the ludicrously-unfortunate budget of Lord Althorp.

But the 1st of March introduced to Parliament and to the country the ministerial plan of Reform. It was debated on its first introduction for seven nights ;—again on the 21st for two nights ; and again on the 18th of April for two nights more. On this last occasion Mr. Sadler delivered one of his most splendid and successful compositions. He seconded Gen. Gascoyne's motion, that it was "not expedient to diminish the number of representatives for England and Wales," which amendment was carried by 299 votes against 291, and in a few hours after, the Parliament was dissolved.

Mr. Sadler, and those with whom he acted, had not concurred, to the full extent, in the conviction expressed by the Duke of Wellington, that it was not possible to improve in the slightest degree, the existing constitution of the House of Commons. Several distinguished members of the Protestant party, such as the Duke of Richmond, Lord Winchelsea, &c. had expressed a very different opinion in Parliament ; and as a manifestation of that opinion, the Marquis of Chandos attempted, before the Whig plan was promulged, to pass a

Bill for disfranchising Evesham, and giving members to Birmingham. And no one can doubt, that if that Administration which had shewn its facility in yielding, in 1829, in a far more serious and hazardous matter, had opened the new reign, in Nov. 1830, by proposing the suppression of ten corrupt boroughs, and the enfranchisement of Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, Glasgow, Bradford, Halifax, Macclesfield, Wakefield, and Stockport, the concession would have been accepted with entire satisfaction by the people, and a new prospect of popularity and permanence would have been opened for the government.

Whether or not the results to the people at large would have been equally beneficial, it is not now easy to determine. It is clear that public opinion would have gained new channels through which to find access to the house of Commons, and by which the discussions of that assembly must have been considerably influenced. It is also evident that the change, while it would have been a most important gain to the democratic portion of the constitution, would have still left the government for the time being in the possession of much real power. This would have been preferable to the existing state of things in one respect ; inasmuch as it is becoming but too probable that there will never

again be a permanent and decided majority for any government that may be formed ; the consequence of which is seen in the necessary weakness of the executive, and the embarrassment and stoppage of the public business. But while these inconveniences have already been felt and experienced, we must remember that the results of a moderate, and perhaps not a *final* Reform, have not been ascertained, and cannot therefore be fully appreciated.

With any scheme of temperate, cautious, and moderate Reform, Mr. Sadler, and the party with whom he acted, were quite prepared to agree. But when the Whigs, perceiving that no other course would preserve to them their recently-gained and dearly-loved place and power, except a general agitation and turmoil,—changed entirely their first intentions, and brought forward, not what they had promised, but a *new constitution* ;—then the country party was at once thrown violently back upon the supporters of the late administration, and the whole Conservative party was once more banded together, to resist a proposition which they held to be altogether revolutionary.

Mr. Sadler's speech on this occasion is one of those productions which cannot easily perish. It unites the two essentials of argument and elo-

quence, in a degree very seldom equalled. He commences by charging upon the Whigs, their reckless departure from all their own professions and pledges, even of the last few weeks. He shewed that Lord Brougham had carefully vindicated himself, in the month of November preceeding, from the imputation of proposing "an innovating or sweeping reform," and had declared that he wished to "stand on the ancient way of the constitution," and "to *repair*, not to pull down." While Lord Grey had declared his views and intentions "to be *guarded and limited* by a prudent care *not to disturb too violently*, by any extreme changes, the established principles and practices of the constitution."

With these professions, Mr. Sadler then proceeded to contrast the measure actually proposed. Nothing could be more at variance. In fact, his own settled conviction was, that the plan had been deliberately altered, between November and March, with the most nefarious intentions. A leading Whig had said to him, exultingly, "Well, if we cannot carry the Bill ourselves, at all events *we can make it impossible for your party to conduct the government!*" In fact, the absolute necessity, if the Whigs were to remain in office, of a dissolution of the existing House of Commons, was too clear; and equally clear was it,

that in order to profit by a dissolution, it was necessary for them violently to excite the minds of the people. And thus it came to pass that a Bill was prepared which it was impossible for the Conservatives to receive, and which it was *intended that they should reject* ; and then the moment of the greatest excitement was eagerly seized upon, to resort to a general election.

From this exposure of the total departure of the authors of the Bill from their own professions, Mr. Sadler proceeded to a view of the actual history of the existing constitution of the House of Commons, and a comparison of it with the new plan of representation now proposed. He shewed how constantly the progress to a freer and larger representation had been going on ; and that at no former period had the popular will been so extensively felt in that house as at present. He then pointed out the absurdities and anomalies of the new scheme ; which, as replacing an antiquated one, by a mighty change, ought of course, to have been in itself a well-contrived and consistent whole. He shewed that to the towns of England, possessing 2,920,095 inhabitants, the ministerial plan gave 295 representatives ; while to the rural districts, with 8,341,342 inhabitants, they assigned only 149. Thus giving to the resident in a borough, *six times* as much political influence as

he would possess if living in an agricultural district. He remarked,

“ When it is considered how little the inventors of this new constitution have been restrained by any of those considerations which have been more or less respected by all previous reformers, with one exception alone ; and hence that they have converted rights of property into mere trusts, and again have seized upon these trusts when it suited them, without any alleged breach whatsoever on the part of their ancient possessors,—I say, it is difficult to imagine how a system so utterly irreconcilable with sense or justice could have been projected. I have alluded to one exception among reformers as little swayed by scruples of the kind adverted to as these have been, and one who was the other evening eulogized in no very measured strains by his Majesty’s Attorney-General,—I mean, Oliver Cromwell. Now I ask that learned eulogist of Cromwell, whether he will stand forth and defend the constitution now proposed, by a comparison with the one that great individual put forth ? I tell him that he cannot. Cromwell really did what these constitution-mongers have professed to do ; he conformed to the basis of property and population, which he evidently laid down for his guide. On a rather close examination of his plan, and comparing it with other documents,

especially those which give, in a very few years after, the relative values of the respective counties, I have been surprised to find how nearly he conformed to that rule. These have, notwithstanding their boasts on the subject, actually reversed it. He gave 237 members to the counties of England, and 143 to the towns. These give, as I have before observed, 149 members to the counties, and 295 to the towns. The masculine mind of the Protector could not produce any thing so false and incoherent as this attempt; nor, tyrant as he was, stoop to any thing so partial and selfish as I shall speedily prove this to be."

He then proceeded through the details of the plan, shewing the whole to be one mass of inconsistency, confusion, and an utter oblivion and violation of all principle; and then proceeded to the following close;—distinguished, it must be conceded, equally for justness of thought and majesty of diction.

"Sir, I regard these new and revolutionary schemes with the greater apprehension and dislike, the more I consider them, and turn to the ancient constitution of my country with increasing attachment. But, when I contemplate that constitution, the object of my early reverence, and which all I have since read and observed in my passage through life has still more endeared to me, I con-

fess I am hurried away with feelings not perhaps quite consistent with calm deliberation ; but when I “ awake my senses that I may the better judge,” I find that reason itself heightens my enthusiasm ; while all those unrivalled names that have arisen among us, formed to correct the past and influence the future opinions of their country and of mankind, have given immutability to those views on this most important subject, which I should be proud to cherish, whoever were their impugnors. Still more do I feel assured when I find the greatest authorities of other countries, wholly unbiased, therefore, by national partialities, loud and unanimous in their admiration of our venerated form of government. Above all, when I consider that experience, far above all other authority, and whose voice is truth itself, has long confirmed its superiority, however compared ; I say, when I consult my own understanding, or am recumbent upon that of infinitely more powerful minds, or open my eyes to simple facts, I feel resolved to cherish and defend to the utmost of my power, and to the last, our happy constitution, and to resist every attempt of those who would destroy it, to place in its stead a scheme and invention of their own, though it were, far unlike this, theoretically just and perfect. Sir, a comparison of the very names of those whose wisdom and patri-

otism formed and perfected our constitution—of those who have eulogised and defended it—with those of the united cabinet who now seek to revolutionize and destroy it, would, I think, shame the attempt, and expose to just derision the self-sufficiency and temerity of their designs. In patriotism are *these* superior? That were impossible. In genius, in wisdom, in knowledge, are they equal? The keenest sarcasm which could be launched at them would be so to compare, or rather contrast them, one by one. It would then be found of each of them that he was not

a twentieth part the tithe

Of his precedent lord.

The former, indeed, established their lasting fame by erecting upon its ancient foundation, and by careful and slow degrees perfecting, the fabric of the constitution; these place their hopes upon mutilating and destroying it. I am not aware that they have any other claims upon the recollection of posterity but what rest upon the present attempt. If, however, they succeed in destroying this wonder of the world, they will be as certain of immortality as those who founded it. The memory of Erostratus is as secure as that of Ctesiphon.

“But, Sir, much as I venerate the founders and assertors of the British constitution, I cannot dare

to attribute to human wisdom or human power, what I believe to be of still higher original. It may seem, indeed, that what man calls accident did much ; that necessity prompted and experience adopted those several provisions, and formed those various adaptations, which constitute the system, which wisdom and patriotism at length perfected. But if ever there were an occasion in which we are justified in appealing to a higher power as overruling those events which produced that system which has been the blessing of this country and of the civilized world, it was that of the establishment of the free institutions of England. May not we exclaim with far greater emphasis than could the Roman orator, “ *Non est humano consilio, ne mediocri quidem, judices, deorum immortalium curâ, res illa perfecta.*” The very origin of Englishmen was favourable to the institution of freedom ; and every event in our changeful history contributed ultimately to its slow, indeed, but hardy growth. The gradual, but constant increase of knowledge had been for centuries ameliorating the condition of the people, and remedying successively the grosser defects in our institutions, when the press poured forth a torrent of divine and humanising truth, and the Reformation broke the chains of despotism, civil as well as religious, and genius and eloquence

went forth unmanacled to their great task of elevating the intellect and purifying the feelings of the people. The almost unbounded property of the ecclesiastic establishments, though infamously seized and disgustingly appropriated, became beneficially divided. Commerce multiplied the wealth of the nation, and mingled society into a more undistinguishable mass, infusing through the whole a portion of its own spirit of enterprise and independence. Then was it that the dreadful struggle between arbitrary monarchy and unbridled democracy commenced, and was pursued with varying success, but with unabated fury, till military despotism, as it ever does, became the arbiter, and settled itself upon the subjugation of both ; thus inflicting upon the wearied and desolated nation, the bitter experience of tyranny in every different form, till its liberties were established, and I hope perpetuated, at the glorious Revolution—a revolution so little like any other the world had previously seen, or has since witnessed ; undesecrated by human blood ; uninfluenced by lawless force ; when the wisest and the greatest of our countrymen in the brightest age of England, utterly rejecting those theoretical changes, which were as obviously suggested to them as to our more rash and ignorant innovators, established and completed that form of govern-

ment which had no archetype in the history of the nations, and which had existed but indistinctly in the theories of former philosophers and politicians — which, embracing the wants and wishes of preceding times, provided for the freedom and happiness of future ones. And thus, while its founders have been the means of elevating this country to its unrivalled pinnacle of greatness, they have, by furnishing the model of the noblest system of government ever witnessed, laid all other countries and every succeeding generation under an eternal debt of gratitude and admiration.

“Something, perhaps, I might have added, regarding the character of the representative branch of this constitution which it is now the fashion with many to decry. But it is unnecessary, nor is this the proper place to do so. Its eloquence will excite the admiration, as its acts will demand the gratitude of posterity. It has been the nurse of freedom; the champion of the rights of nature; and, above all, the protector of the friendless and the poor. It is identified with whatever is great or patriotic in the annals of the country. In a word, it is a fit personification of the great and noblest community upon earth.

“But if it should be objected that these observa-

tions on the excellency of our present constitution, which our reformers stigmatize as so corrupt and rotten, are mere declamation,—a short and ready way of evading what is often unanswerable,—let us no longer advert to opinions and authorities, of whatever order, but turn our eyes to undeniable facts. “The tree is known by its fruits,” is a maxim as true in politics as in religion. What, then, are the fruits this system has produced? And in this case the fruits must be of too general a character to be overlooked, and too plain to be mistaken. In adverting to them, I am not about to contend that the constitution we enjoy is theoretically perfect, or that practically it has been always administered in the best possible manner; still I think experience decides that the proud boast of successive generations of our patriots—that England possesses the most free, happy, and efficient form of government existing on the face of the earth, is just; and that it has been productive of the happiest effects, is fully substantiated. Can we forbear, on an occasion like this, casting our eyes on the present condition of the empire, and tracing that measure of prosperity which we have, under Divine Providence, long enjoyed, to its true source? A territory placed almost at the northern extremity of the civilized

world ; so confined in extent as to justify the language of one of its poets—

—— a spot

Not quickly found, if negligently sought ;
with no peculiar advantages of soil or climate ;
with no wealth but what its people have created ;
where, under the encouragement and guarantee
of her free institutions, industry, directed by intellect and supplied by capital, has made the mightiest and most triumphant efforts ever witnessed in the history of man ; a country which, while accumulating its internal resources, has spread its dominion like a zone round the habitable world, and gathered under its sway a greater mass of human beings than ever bowed to the sceptre of any of its ancient and vaunted universal monarchies ; a country where, for ages past, no hostile foot has dared to tread ; no slave has breathed ; where impartial justice has constantly presided ; and which religion and humanity have made their own. The nurse of heroism and valour, the school of genius and science, and the seat of that moral empire which her literature has established throughout the world, she seems still destined to nobler tasks than those she has yet achieved, and to be visibly selected by Providence as the great instrument of benefiting and blessing the universal family of mankind. But I

will not indulge in these topics of exultation and gratitude, however justly they may suggest themselves to my mind. Let me only ask whether all these great and glorious results, which fill our past history, which crowd the present era, and which extend to the remotest verge of the earth, comport with the idea of a weak, corrupt, and decayed constitution—rotten at its very heart! The idea is preposterous! So long as political philosophy shall acknowledge that effects so great and stupendous as these are produced alone by adequate causes, so long will the vituperations against our present institutions be as inconsistent with possibility and truth, as they are insulting to the country.

“Nor is the excellency of our constitution to be estimated alone by the blessings it has conferred upon us, but also by the calamities from which it has been equally the means of protecting us. It has preserved this country in security and internal peace, amidst the ruin of empires and the fall of thrones,—in freedom, amidst surrounding tyranny. Can such a system justify the illustration applied to it, more than once, during this discussion, that of a rotten and sinking vessel? No! its soundness and strength have been too recently tried. When the foundations of the social system of Europe were broken up, and the lawless floods

of democracy rose and overwhelmed the proudest elevations of society under one wide and stormy abyss ; when all seemed darkness above and tempestuousness around, then was the British constitution seen like a sacred ark ; mounting triumphant in the storm, and preserving for a world restored to peace and order, the elements of loyalty, liberty, and law. Again, Sir, the same portents seem returning ; the cloud appears gathering and darkening in the distance, and the roar of the desolating floods is heard from afar ! And this is the very moment that we are urged to quit the ark of our safety, and trust ourselves for preservation to the shapeless raft which an inexperienced crew have suddenly provided for us !

“ Such, then, is the constitution which we are exhorted to desert and deliver over to destruction, in order that another system may be erected on its ruins. But what an experiment ! If it succeed, it were difficult to suppose that the country could become greater, and grow more prosperous than it has under the constitution bequeathed to us by our ancestors ; if it fail, dreadful indeed must be the consequences. The history of the world presents but few and doubtful instances of free communities surrendering their institutions in hope of an undefined advantage to their liberty and happiness by some great and sudden change ;

but it is crowded with cases where such a course has led to their degradation, slavery, and ruin. At all times such attempts have been found dangerous ; at the present moment, when almost every government of Europe seems shaken to its very base, and many have already tottered to their fall, the present attempt appears presumptuous in a tenfold degree. It might have been hoped that the events of the last fifty years would have instructed us as to the value of our settled institutions, and united us all, hand and heart, in their preservation. The scenes of confusion, confiscation, and blood, had, we had hoped, closed. Is the same fearful drama to be again enacted—the character and catastrophe the same—the scene only changed, and changed, alas ! to our own country ? May God forbid ! I regard, it may be perceived, the condition proposed to us by the present bill, as only one of transition ; it is impossible to view it otherwise. A proposition which is, on the part of its promulgators one of compromise, and, on that of its most zealous supporters, accepted only as a first and large step to their ultimate designs, can only be the precursor of further and indefinite changes—

Through what variety of untried being,

Through what new scenes and changes it must pass,

I shall not attempt to prognosticate ; but as to its

final result, should it be adopted, few rational men can entertain much doubt. The catalogue of compliances which must be made, and of changes which must ensue, should this measure pass, are, I should think, sufficiently apparent in the minds of those who hear me. The steps by which we must descend to the catastrophe may not be precisely seen, but the termination is certain, nor can it be remote. Had we no examples, too recent to be forgotten, and too similar in their nature to these meditated changes to be overlooked, it would be most easy, from their very nature, to divine their issue. The representative part of our system,—already, if we must confess the fact, so powerful as to leave the other branches of the legislature barely independent, were the influence which the crown exercises in this House, and the connexion of this House with the aristocracy, dissolved,—would, literally speaking, become omnipotent. If there be any, the least, utility in the other branches of the legislature, the royal and aristocratic power of the state,—the present constitution of this House can alone preserve it. I will not attempt to prove by laboured arguments what must be abundantly clear without any; but if any doubt remain on the mind of any one who hears me, I will resolve that doubt by an authority, second in point of information to none

now among us, and the more to be attended to, inasmuch as he composes one of the members of his Majesty's present government. The author of that admired work, the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, when advocating parliamentary reform upon the direct, in contradistinction to the virtual, principle of representation, thus delivers himself upon this momentous point:—"The powers of the King and Lords (says Sir J. Mackintosh) have never been formidable in England, but from discords between the House of Commons and its pretended constituents. Were the House really to become the vehicle of the popular voice, the privileges of the other bodies, in opposition to the sense of the people and their representatives, would become *as dust in the balance*." If, then, in this new system, not only the Lords Temporal, with all their power and privileges, and the hierarchy of the church, representing as they do their own order, but the Sovereign himself, would become "as dust in the balance" when weighed against this reformed House of Commons, can we suppose that such unwieldy and expensive parts of the system would be retained, their functions having become totally superseded and their very existence useless? That the monarchy itself, expensive as it must necessarily be, would in these days of rigid frugality and retrenchment be retained, its power

being as dust in the balance, and its office therefore useless, it were folly and infatuation to suppose. No, Sir, with a House of Commons thus “reformed,” on the authority of the hon. member of his Majesty’s government I have just quoted, the fate of the peerage and of the monarchy is sealed. The next sweeping reform, and it could not be far distant, would wipe away this expensive “dust,” and give to the government of the country not the essence merely, that it would have the moment this bill should pass,—but the very name of democracy. Let then his Majesty’s present advisers, supposing (which God forbid) this measure should pass, approach their Sovereign with this bill; and, practising on his generous and unsuspecting nature, obtain his assent—at the moment his royal hand shall inscribe the fatal act, it will require no peculiar strength of mental vision to perceive the image of another hand, shadowy indeed, but darkening into reality, and inscribing in portentous characters upon the tablets of the history of this ancient monarchy, MENE—
‘Thy kingdom is departed from thee!’”

We are aware, indeed, that in adducing this passage, splendid as it is, we are open to the remark, that the direful predictions of the closing sentences have never been fulfilled by the event.

The same objection would apply to many of the finest passages in the speeches of Fox, of Pitt, and of Burke. It belongs not to uninspired man to prophecy ; and whoever allows his imagination to transport him over scenes of future years, and offers her representations as predictions of actual events, will, in nine cases out of ten, find himself very wide of the mark. Almost always are there secret biasses and unseen influences at work, which counteract or neutralize those more obvious causes upon which alone our calculations are founded. In the present instance, however, Mr. Sadler was not so far wide of the mark as many glowing orators before him have been. We have not, it is true, yet seen the crown of England torn from the royal brow ; but we have seen what is but a very few degrees removed from that calamity. We have seen the sovereign,—the same popular sovereign by whose own personal and frank concession to the people the Reform Bill was carried,—we have seen this very sovereign insultingly denied the privilege of choosing his own confidential servants. We have seen the choice of the ministers of the crown forcibly wrested from the monarch, and a cabinet forced upon him by an Irish adventurer, destitute alike of birth or fortune, of honorable fame, of the least particle of integrity, and of even the lowest

attribute of manhood, that of personal courage. By such an one have we seen the Royal prerogative forcibly seized upon, and the government of the first empire in the world, virtually assumed! And after this, shall we say that Mr. Sadler, in the fervour of his eloquence, was carried to any very preposterous lengths, when he warned the Royal patron of the Reform Bill, that in the adoption of that measure, he signed the practical abdication of his hereditary crown?

We shall add but one further remark before we close this chapter; and than to a totally different part of the subject.

Elevated as was the character of this speech,—a composition which no man can read with an unprejudiced mind without at once admitting its claim to the very highest order of merit,—it will doubtless occur to many, that the production of a splendid oration, or even of two or three such, will not of itself entitle their author to the rank of a statesman. Clear-sightedness in judgment, and decision in action, are of yet higher value than eloquence in the senate. Some of the greatest speeches, perhaps, that ever were delivered in the British Parliament, were delivered by Sheridan;—yet it would be a mere abuse of terms to call that brilliant, but unprincipled voluptuary, a statesman. Admitting this, we allude, here,

briefly, to an occasion or two in which Mr. Sadler was called upon, in the private deliberations of his party, to assist in the decision of most important questions ; and in which his counsel, in neither case followed,—was such as has been since proved by the event, to have been pre-eminently that of a wise and sagacious mind.

The first occasion arose upon the introduction of the Reform Bill. The question was, what should be the course adopted. The Conservative party, then thoroughly united by the common danger, were universally indignant at the character of the scheme; but it was necessary to decide, in what way the proposition should be met. Mr. Sadler's counsel was that of a man of decision of character. Viewing the Bill as a rash, unconstitutional, and revolutionary measure, as involving a plain violation of the previous pledges given, and as insidiously intended merely to excite a flame in the country, his vote was for an *instant* and public stigma to be set upon it, by the proposition for the first reading being indignantly negatived. This, in the then temper and strength of the party, could have been effected by a large majority.

There is no difficulty, now, in discerning the practical wisdom, as well as straight-forwardness of this course. Neither party had then made any preparations for a dissolution ; nor was there any

political excitement in the country. Had they been thus braved, the ministry must either have resigned, or dissolved Parliament. They would probably have adopted the latter course. An election at that moment, before the public mind had begun to ferment, would have gained them at the utmost, forty or fifty seats, and they would have met the new house with scarcely the narrowest working majority. The result would have been, either their speedy retirement, or the enactment of a moderate measure of Reform, differing greatly from the reckless experiment under which we are now suffering.

But this counsel was overruled by more temporizing opinions. The opportunity was allowed to pass, never to return. The Bill was read a first time, and circulated through the country; and its strange and sweeping propositions soon set men's minds in a ferment. Every market-place or public-house orator in the kingdom began to collect his admirers, and to prepare his resolutions, petition, and instructions to his representative. The members for populous places were beset by a storm of supplications and menaces, and one after another began to falter. The first reading, had a division been taken, would have been lost by 60 votes;—the second, three weeks after, was carried by 302 votes against 301. But the ministers had now

gained their main object ; they had effectually excited the popular mind ; and a dissolution, in such a state of things, was what they most ardently desired. Just at the moment best suited to their purpose, when the public fever was at its height, the opportunity they sought for was afforded them. On the 18th of April, just seven weeks after the first introduction of the measure, the opposition defeated one of its leading provisions by a narrow majority, and thus gave the Ministry the pretext for which they were waiting. The result was, the return of such a house of Commons as enabled the Whigs to carry any Bill they pleased. Thus, throughout the whole business, the opposition appeared to be literally playing into the hands of government ; and the effect was,—that which under no other circumstances could have taken place,—the ultimate success of the very measure, which, when first brought in, not a single one of all its friends expected for a moment to be able to carry !

The second instance of the same decision of character, in the subject of this memoir, occurred when, in May, 1832, the administration of Lord Grey resigned, on the successful resistance of the Conservative party in the house of Lords to one of the main provisions in the Reform Bill. The Duke of Wellington was called to his sov-

ereign's side, and the party to which Mr. Sadler was attached, had once more an opportunity of resuming the reins of government.

The counsel given by Mr. S. at this eventful crisis, was,—“*an instant prorogation.*” Had this course been adopted, accompanied by a pledge from the sovereign, that an extensive measure of Reform should be frankly offered to parliament, immediately on its reassembling,—the result would unquestionably have been, the casting back the Whig party into the weakness from which they had emerged only a few months before. Their power lay in the then existing house of Commons. *That* once broken up, and scattered through the provinces, a government of power and energy would have had little to fear. A few weeks of repose would have calmed the public mind; and parliament would have reassembled in the autumn with very different feelings from those with which it separated.

That house of Commons contained a considerable number of members whom the sudden emergency alone had so elevated. Many of these had no very definite principles or attachments, and their concurrence might have been expected in any scheme, emanating from either party, which promised a satisfactory termination to this great controversy. Considerations such

as these, with many others that might be added, rendered a prorogation, which would at once have secured a pause, and an interim for negotiation, the most clearly desirable. But by one of those singular “happenings” which men too generally ascribe to chance, a summons to a private consultation, addressed to Mr. Sadler by one of the leaders of his party, miscarried, and reached his hands more than two hours after the consultation had taken place. The decision then taken was in favour of a hesitating, doubtful course. The retreating party saw their advantage; rallied; threatened popular movements; carried a strong resolution through the house of Commons; and in the end, the greatest captain of the day again retreated before the dread,—not the fact,—of internal discord, and the Whigs were placed in the singular position of being *obliged* to carry their own Bill,—which they had proposed merely as a means of exciting popular animosity against the Tories, and which they expected and intended the house of Lords greatly to modify,—they were obliged, we repeat, by the popular feeling which they had themselves raised, to carry this measure, *entire*, through both houses!

Whether, had Mr. Sadler been present at the conference above alluded to, his ready eloquence and clear discrimination of the difficulties of the

case, might have prevailed in favor of a bolder policy, it is of course impossible now to tell. But, on a retrospect of the whole of that vast and long-protracted struggle, the evil results of the hesitating and temporizing policy adopted, in both the crises described above, are so clear and indisputable, that it is impossible not to be at once impressed with the conviction, that the man who, in each case, at once counselled the bolder course, shewed himself, above all concerned in these transactions, the true and native-born statesman.

The motion, in seconding which, Mr. Sadler made the speech we have recently described, having been carried, in spite of the opposition of the government, a dissolution of Parliament naturally followed. The excitement then prevailing rendering the result of an election at Newark extremely doubtful, and Mr. Sadler's parliamentary friends being desirous of placing his return to the next parliament beyond a doubt; he was advised, by the same noble friend who had originally been the means of introducing him to the legislature, to become a candidate for Aldborough in Yorkshire; a borough in which his Grace possessed the natural influence of large property; and for which Mr. S. continued to sit during the re-

mainder of his parliamentary career. Without, however, any communication with him, and without even a visit to the place, he was nominated, at the same general election, for the city of Norwich, and, a poll taking place, as many as 977 votes were recorded in his favor. Success, indeed, against two ministerial candidates who had personally canvassed the town for several days, and who expended a very large sum of money, was not anticipated. But the appearance of nearly a thousand electors of a single city at the hustings in his favor, unsolicited and unrewarded, was, certainly, a mark of public esteem, of which any man might reasonably have felt proud.

CHAPTER X.

SECOND MOTION FOR POOR LAWS IN IRELAND—WITHDRAWMENT OF HIS MIND FROM POLITICS—MOTION ON THE STATE OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS.

ON the 29th of August, 1831, Mr. Sadler again brought under the notice of Parliament the great question of Poor Laws for Ireland. He adverted, in thus repeating his effort, to the evident progress which the question had made, both within the legislature, and throughout the country; as one indication of which, he could refer to numerous petitions praying for such an enactment. His own labours, both in the House of Commons and through the medium of the press, had mainly contributed to arouse this public feeling; and his speech on this occasion was well calculated to sustain and increase it. It added several further arguments; the weight of some of which was quite

overwhelming. We shall quote two such passages, upon which alone, had nothing else ever been urged, the whole issue might have been safely rested. One exhibits and establishes the lamentable necessity for legislative interference; the other proves that a Poor Law mainly, and almost solely, is the remedy required.

The need of a legal provision was thus irrefragably proved:

“I have hitherto adverted solely to that state of distress and suffering which is common to the poor of Ireland; but, Sir, this gloomy picture must be yet darkened in order to convey a true idea of their real condition. Placed always on the verge of extreme indigence, the slightest reverse plunges them at once into the gulph. Reduce their food in quality they cannot, nor can they diminish its quantity without the most afflicting consequences. When, therefore, they encounter those fluctuations in seasons, and failure in produce, which it is the common fate of all countries to sustain, the effect is appalling. Then recur those dreadful visitations, which at short intervals have constantly afflicted Ireland; when habitual privation at once increases to famine, and the incipient fever, which the want and despondency of the people constantly produce, rises into pestilence, completing the

catalogue of their sufferings, and filling their cup of misery to the very brim. I will not particularize how frequently these dreadful calamities have, in late times, returned upon that unhappy people; nor calculate the devastations they have occasioned. On one of the many pestilences which visited the country during the last century, and which, like all the rest, succeeded to a scarcity, amounting in many districts to a famine, the mortality was enormous; it is stated by Rutty to have amounted to one-fifth of the whole population. What a scene of misery was then presented. One of the most dreadful of the plagues of Egypt repeated in unhappy Ireland. The destroying angel then smote that wretched people, and left a corpse in every cottage! The last fever, that of 1817, (for the late mortality is not yet made known to us,) was by no means the most severe, and yet Drs. Baker and Cheyne state that at least one million four hundred thousand were afflicted by the pestilence, of whom between 60 and 70,000 expired, exclusively of those who had already sunk under that state of want and dejection, which then, as in every other instance, preceded that frightful calamity, and indeed produced it. Then was it that multitudes of the poor wretches found themselves destitute in their utmost need of all relief whatever, even men-

dicancy failed them,—they carried infection with them, and were no longer received; many of them cleared and driven from their own native homes, were repulsed when they sought to take refuge in the towns, and had not where to lay their head; some of them indeed crept into fever huts which were suddenly erected on the sides of roads, and in open spaces, where the diseased, the dying, and the dead were crowded together, exhibiting a spectacle of human misery rarely witnessed in any country of the world. Where was that national charity which should have succoured the people at that awful moment; which in England would have been a very present help in time of trouble; and would have stood between the living and the dead, until the plague had been stayed, which spread far and wide, and desolated the country? It was wanting. The distant sympathies of the empire were indeed awakened; at least all but those of the absentees; but their relief came too late; the wretched victims had finally escaped from human suffering! Nor can the apologists for the continuance of such a state of things make the miserable excuse that these visitations are unexpected. The experience of centuries is full upon this awful subject. They know that they have constantly occurred, and they are as sure that they will re-

turn. And yet they oppose themselves as vehemently against a provision which it would be the first business, under similar circumstances, of every civilized state in the world to establish !

“ But I need not draw the attention of the house to a fact to which the deepest consideration and the warmest sympathies of the country at large, are, at this moment, principally directed ; namely, the certainty and severity of these periodical seasons of distress, under one of which Ireland is at present groaning. It is not on these that I ground my argument in favour of a legislative provision for the poor of Ireland ; these it might be contended could be otherwise alleviated. On the contrary, it is that constant wretchedness which exists among them at all times, and which occasions these scenes of peculiar suffering, which, I contend, demands that provision. These are but occasional heavings of that misery which has constantly afflicted Ireland—the swelling of that dark abyss of suffering which never abates, over which a spirit of suffering and despair is perpetually brooding, and rousing the troublous element to renewed storms and agitations.

“ But, Sir, the house may think that I am dealing with this important subject by figures of speech : I will therefore turn to figures of arith-

metic, and from them I will demonstrate, beyond the possibility of a doubt or contradiction, the accuracy of the dark picture I have drawn of the miserable condition of the poor of Ireland: I will adduce facts—which through the understanding will make a deeper impression upon the heart, than the most pathetic appeal to the imagination, by whomsoever made, could possibly produce. I shall not, then, fatigue the attention of the house by pursuing a course which I might well take, and with much effect; namely, verifying my general description by appealing to the unanimous declarations of the most eminent political writers of that country; or by quoting the most intelligent witnesses which have appeared before the various committees—appointed to examine and report on the distressed condition of Ireland; or by referring to those numerous and able medical reports, which have traced to that condition those peculiar and fatal diseases from which it is never wholly free; but I shall proceed to show, by the incontrovertible evidence of statistical facts, the terrible consequences of the unrelieved distress of Ireland. For this purpose I shall take the census of Ireland, and compare the enormous rate of mortality which it exhibits, with that of England and Wales. In the latter, I find that in the total number of inhabitants, whose ages

were ascertained in the census of 1821, there were, under the age of 40 years, 8,060,004 persons; of the age of 40 and upwards, 2,469,667. In Ireland the number under 40, were 5,593,855—what then was the number which ought to have been found above that age, had the condition of the people corresponded with that of England? 1,714,014. But, Sir, there were only 1,199,375 remaining in existence: above half a million, therefore, must have been swept away by the cause to which I have been referring; unrelieved distress; or to use the emphatic phraseology of Irish political economists, *cleared!* Nor, Sir, does this comparison fully exhibit the existing difference. Much of the population of England is concentrated into towns, where, from other causes than distress, an undue proportion of mortality prevails. Let us, therefore, for the purpose of more accurate comparison, ascertain the same proportions in Wales, where the town population is not relatively so numerous, and in Connaught; both mountainous districts, both principally engaged in the healthiest of all industrious pursuits, agriculture; but the latter the most thinly peopled part of Ireland, and therefore always the scene of the deepest distress. We shall then see more clearly, the fatal consequences resulting from the existing state of things in the latter country.

There were in the disseminated population of Wales in 1821, 530,770 inhabitants under 40 years of age, and 169,440 above that age. In Connaught there were at the same period 927,393 under 40; what number ought to have been found above that age, had the physical condition of the Irish been equal to that of the Welsh? 296,050. There were above 60 per cent short of that number, namely, only 181,644. As compared with Wales then, for every surviving million in Connaught above forty, 629,836 have been swept off by untimely death; to say nothing of the havoc which disease consequent upon destitution has made in the earlier periods of life. Between six and seven, then, to every ten, thus untimely perish! Merciful God, can this be so? It is! What is the havoc of pestilence and war, compared with this aggregate of the victims of unrelieved poverty. And before this constant and silent devastation has done its final work, what suffering and sorrow does not this state of things imply! "Few and evil are the days of the human pilgrimage," was the touching exclamation of an ancient patriarch; but beyond the lot of mortality, to these poor Irish those few days are thus diminished, and their evils thus embittered."

From the portraiture of these afflictive facts,

Mr. Sadler proceeded, to inquire “What can be the causes of this afflicting state of things, in a country which forms a part of the richest empire upon earth, and where therefore those sufferings are heightened, and humanity itself insulted, by the unnatural contrasts perpetually exhibited?”

“First, the inquiry presents itself, infinitely the most important in reference to the subject, whether there is any natural cause of this continued poverty, to be found either in the country itself, or in the character of its inhabitants? And here, at all events, no difference of opinion can possibly arise, and in answering this question I will again avail myself of the language of Bacon, on this subject; who, in enumerating the natural advantages of Ireland, has not, I think, omitted any one source of national wealth with which a partial Providence can endow any country upon earth. “This island,” says he, “has so many dowries of nature, the fruitfulness of the soil, the excellency of the climate, the ports, the rivers, the quarries, the woods, the fisheries, and especially its race of valiant, hardy, and active men, that it is not easy to find such a conflux of commodities, if the hand of man did but join with the hand of nature.”

“The natural prolificness of Ireland is, however, rarely disputed; but its miseries are not unfrequently attributed to another cause, and it is

said that the distresses of Ireland are chargeable to its surplus population. This, therefore, dictates the second important inquiry—whether excessive numbers be the real cause of the general distress. The fact is notoriously otherwise. There is no one who has the slightest knowledge of the subject that is not perfectly aware of the utter fallacy, the extravagant folly of such a supposition. Let those who, on the subject of the extreme poverty and degradation of Ireland, repeat the cuckoo note of the economists,—‘surplus population,’ and suppose they have solved the fearful political enigma which the condition of Ireland propounds,—stand forth and say whether they do or do not know that the misery of the Irish, arising either from the nature and insufficiency of their food, their clothing, and their habitations; from the dearths and famines, and the epidemics, which they periodically endured, more fatal often than the plague; from the constant want of labour, and its inadequate remuneration,—were evils which existed, to a still greater degree, when the population was notoriously scanty, not a third nor a fourth of its present amount, and when the political economists of those days attributed these sufferings to a paucity of population, and busied themselves about the task of replenishing it;—always busied, therefore, in attempts beyond their

reach, and neglecting the obvious duties dictated alike by policy and humanity, and which it had been easy to perform. But, to attend to the present assumption,—so far from the increase of population having occasioned these evils, it has clearly mitigated, and would with efficient institutions, have removed them. The amelioration of the condition of Ireland in all these respects is universally acknowledged; still much remains to be accomplished, But to attribute effects in full operation centuries ago to alleged causes which have only recently had any existence, is a doctrine too paradoxical, one would have thought, even for the advocates of political economy. To place such absurd notions in a still clearer point of view;—Ireland a century ago, having only about two millions of inhabitants, *imported* grain in considerable quantities; still multitudes of her people were starving. This year, with at least quadruple that population, she will *export*, I should suppose, 18 or 20 millions of bushels of corn; and this while the exports of cattle have enormously augmented;—and yet, multitudes of her people are still starving! So much for the question of surplus population, as compared with surplus produce.

“ Again, Sir, the alleged minute division of the farms in Ireland as the cause of much of its distress, is an equally erroneous assumption. In

proof of this, I will not advert to the condition of the provinces of Flanders, where, with about thrice the population on the same space, and with naturally a far worse soil, the cultivators, down to the day-labourer, are, or at least were to a late period, comfortable and prosperous, furnishing abundance to their own country, and a surplus of at least one-third of their produce for the supply of others—a most instructive lesson, I think, to this country; I will simply allude to the state of Ireland in this respect, on which a most unaccountable delusion almost universally prevails. By adverting to the census, it will appear, that were the land of Ireland divided among the agricultural families, there would be at least from thirty to forty acres to each. But it is not so divided: on the contrary, it is represented as one great cause of distress that much of it is held in small portions. Meantime, however, I will venture to assert, that in those parts of the country where the population is the most dense, or, in other words, where the property is the most divided, there is it the most valuable; and there is found the greatest degree of peace, comfort, and prosperity. The local condition of Ireland at this moment, fully warrants my assertion, which is corroborated by the most intelligent witnesses which have ap-

peared before the different parliamentary committees appointed to examine the state of that country.

“ But, Sir, the pretence that Ireland is too densely peopled, in reference to either its fertility or extent, is almost entirely abandoned, and another convenient reason is alleged for the distress and poverty of Ireland, namely, the supposed indolence and improvidence of the Irish character,—a cause not one whit less erroneous than the preceding ones, and one which adds insult to the injury inflicted upon that country. That they do not labour when it is impossible for them to obtain work, nor save when extortion leaves them no means of accumulation, I do not mean to dispute; and that these are the reasons for these imputations upon them, I have the authority of Sir John Davis for asserting. But every writer upon that country, and all the evidences that have been called before your committees in reference to its condition, have been unanimous in describing them as most anxious to obtain work, and as grateful for it when afforded them. Read, for instance, Mr. Griffith’s recent report on the roads in the southern districts of Ireland, and you will find him pourtraying the Irish character in these respects in a different manner. He not only describes the industry of the Irish labourers

when employed, but their extraordinary care and frugality; he depicts them as saving all their wages, and erecting by these gains, comfortable cottages, purchasing implements of husbandry and cattle, and becoming all at once, as it were, prosperous and happy. But, Sir, had we no evidence in disproof of these constantly repeated accusations but that of our own senses, I think few of us could fail to be convinced of their fallacy. For it is notorious, that, either in this country, or in the new world, wherever labour is to be obtained, no matter how hard or revolting, there are the Irish. Look at them in this the most laborious season of the year. Thousands of them annually traverse the breadth of both islands, and cross the sea that separates them, in search of a few weeks' employment, at which, when obtained, they work like slaves, while they live like ascetics. And then, resisting every temptation, some of which, I fear, would be too much for their accusers, they carry home, almost entire, their hard earnings in their tattered garments,—I wish I could say, an offering to lay on the humble altar of domestic enjoyment,—but, on the contrary, a means wherewith to pay those extortionate rents which are demanded for the wretched cabin, raised by themselves, which affords them shelter, and the

narrow plot which furnishes them with their scanty food. Thus conducting themselves, they are nevertheless accused of indolence and improvidence; and while deprived of labour at home, and thus eagerly searching for it elsewhere, the economists exclaim, in the language, and with the feelings of an oppressor of ancient times,—*Ye are idle! Ye are idle!*

“It is, therefore, neither to Providence, nor to the country itself, nor to the number of its inhabitants, nor to their character and disposition, that the distress of Ireland is attributable. But it is to a want of provision for the poor, and to that evident and inveterate evil, absenteeism, with those exactions, clearings, and drivings, which it occasions; that want of labour and lowness of wages, which also spring from the same cause, and which aggravate the evil to which they are thus exposed; it is to these causes, and especially to the last, that the evils long endured by that unhappy country, are clearly chargeable. And it is only by giving to it a system long ago established in England, and to which, notwithstanding all declamation to the contrary, the great superiority in the general condition of the lower classes is mainly owing, that these deep and inveterate evils can alone be mitigated and removed.”

The strength of the case now began to make itself felt. If not in the *division*, assuredly in the *debate*, “the ayes had it.” As many as twelve different members of the House of Commons spoke in support of Mr. Sadler’s motion. It was opposed only by three or four; all of whom were connected with the government, and all of whom admitted that the question could not much longer be postponed. Lord Althorp, on the part of the ministry, preferred moving the previous question to a more direct opposition; and even in that moderated shape, the negative was only carried by a majority of twelve—fifty-two voting for Mr. Sadler’s motion, and sixty-four for the previous question. The *Times* newspaper, too, which had spoken disparagingly of Mr. Sadler’s effort of the preceding year, now remarked, that “his speech was able
“and eloquent; nor are we among those who
“consider it a defect, that he treated the subject
“broadly.” “Mr. Stanley told the simple truth
“when he said, that the necessity of Poor Laws
“had become so much a matter of general con-
“viction, that no government could much longer
“oppose them.” To which we must be allowed to add, that the chief cause of that “general conviction” must be sought for in the labors, both in parliament and by the press,—of Mr. Sadler himself.

It was about this period that a considerable change took place in the position and estimation of Mr. Sadler in the House of Commons, and in political society generally. He had originally entered that house for a political purpose. The degree of success which attended his first effort was such, as to encourage high expectations among the party to which he attached himself. Shortly after arose the Reform Bill agitation, and he was called, by his associates, into the very front rank, and selected to second General Gascoigne's motion, upon which issue was joined, and a dissolution rendered necessary. That speech fully sustained his fame ; and by a second, in the next parliament, he lost no rank or estimation ; but with these efforts may be said to have ended his party life. Although interested and engaged for a short period in these contests, his zeal and energy quickly flagged. The accustomed "current of his soul" resumed its force. His mind, drawn away for awhile, soon relapsed into its wonted pursuits and engagements. For more than twenty years the chief employment of his leisure hours had been, the study of the condition, wants, and miseries, of the labouring poor ; and his favourite object had been, to devise means for the removal of those miseries, and the general amelioration of the condition of the working classes.

Called off, for a short period, from these pursuits, his mind felt tasked, and ill at ease; and soon the burden became insupportable, and he abandoned himself to his long-accustomed and favorite avocations. The House of Commons continued, week by week, and month by month, to employ itself "in committee," over the various clauses of the Reform Bill; but Mr. Sadler's interest in the question visibly abated, and his mind reverted to its accustomed course of thought. To his party, in skirmishing debate, he proved of little advantage; not that his talents were unable to be turned to such a purpose; but because his whole soul was absorbed in other pursuits. Rapidly, therefore, his position in the house changed. A degree of disappointment naturally arose in some quarters; the mere politicians, or political economists, or men of fashion, voted him more than ever "a bore;" but the country at large soon began to comprehend his motives and to appreciate his character; and if he lost rank as a party leader; he gained it as a pure and simple-hearted philanthropist.

The change of which we are speaking may be dated from the autumn of 1831; but we may advance, for a moment, a little, and exhibit what may be considered the close of his *political* career, in the last speech made by him on the Reform

Bill; which he delivered on the 2nd of February, 1832. We are not aware that, after this period, he opened his lips in Parliament on political affairs; and in this, his last deprecation of that great change, it will be observed that his chief ground of objection consists in the great public wrong inflicted on the working classes.

“ I shall certainly make a few observations upon what has fallen from the noble Lord opposite, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour and the general wish for a division. The noble Lord has obviously wandered from the immediate question before the House,—that of the amendment,—nor shall I therefore strictly confine myself to it. Among other things, the noble Lord has stated, with apparent complacency, that the fixed amount of the qualification will, in consequence of the difference in value of houses in large and small towns, vary the franchise, and obviate the objections previously urged as to the apparent uniformity of the proposed qualification; but I would remind the noble Lord that there is one uniformity which still remains, and one of a most forbidding and insulting nature, namely, a *uniformity of disfranchisement* as regards the lower and most industrious classes in every part of the United Kingdom; the vast proportion of whom reside in houses beneath the standard arbitrarily fixed upon

by the noble Lord. I have not heard from the framers of this measure any very accurate calculation as to the proportion of the community that will be intrusted with the franchise under the Bill, or of that immense majority to whom it will refuse that privilege; but I believe, that at least twenty millions of the people of the kingdom will be left without any representation whatever; and *that* at a time when the principle of virtual representation is stigmatised as little better than none, and is to be superseded by a measure professedly liberal!

“At present, I believe, that in the greater part of one hundred towns, some of them of considerable magnitude and importance, every householder above the condition of pauperism has his vote; and consequently the humbler ranks of society, being always the most numerous, have, as they ought to have under any fair and permanent system of representation, their influence in this House. It is true that that class are, as “pot-wallopers,” or under one description or other, the subject of constant ridicule and insult with many honourable members: even to-night the noble Lord has very pointedly alluded to their subserviency and corruption. But I think that they often exercise their franchises as honestly and independently, and are quite as little influenced

by corrupt and selfish motives, as are many honourable members of this House, or indeed as are any rank of society, however elevated. And who and what are the class that this measure, which was to give such universal satisfaction, and which we are assured is to be permanent, proposes virtually and actually to disfranchise for ever? Why, the very men who have created all the capital of the country,—who give to that capital all its value,—who sustain a vast proportion of the burthens of the State,—and who, in the hour of danger, stand forth as the defenders of the country, and save its honour and existence at the expence of their valour and their blood,—the men who have created those very branches of industry, and have raised from comparative insignificance those very places, which it is proposed now to enfranchise,—but who are not only to be utterly excluded, under the present Bill, from all political influence in any such industrious community, but are to have their political existence annihilated everywhere else: in a word, the vast and overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of our European empire, who are henceforth, therefore, to be regarded as so many political ser-viles and slaves. At a time when the main reason for extending the franchise is to give direct representation to the great interests which have

latterly grown up among us, and therefore to confer the franchise upon certain large towns, a distinction is to be established in those very places upon no imaginable grounds, whether of a moral, social, or political nature; but *one which will operate as an injury, and be felt as an insult*, by the industrious part of the people thus excluded, and thereby *lay the foundation of perpetual feuds and discontents*. The noble Lord has, indeed, in one of his opening speeches, exulted in the idea of how few voters there will be found in certain great factories. I will venture to state to the noble Lord, that the circumstance is *no true ground of satisfaction or security*; and I think that, if the noble Lord better knew the course which the great manufactures of this country have taken of late years, he could not have so argued. The operatives, for instance, in the large factories to which I now allude, and in which the noble Lord says there will be so few voters, would, under the domestic system which has prevailed, or under a less extensive monopoly of business, many of them be themselves little manufacturers, occupying, in all probability, £10 houses, and advancing in a course of honest industry and unremitting attention; to a state of independence and comparative affluence; but now, while a commercial policy which, however inevitable, is in some important

respects to be much deplored, has prostrated the once independent operative manufacturer, and sent him to the factory for employment, the present political policy is to deprive him of all influence, and complete his degradation. Nor can it be said with truth, that the interests of the great employer and the employed are always seen and felt to be identical; on the contrary, both not unfrequently act under a directly different view and impression; nor will any one dare to assert, who is conversant with both, that the former, respectable and well-informed as they doubtless are, monopolize the entire intellect or intelligence of the great manufacturing interests. The more honourable members become acquainted with the operatives of England—with that class whom this measure will leave, prospectively, wholly unrepresented everywhere—the less, I can assure them, will they doubt their knowledge either of their own interests or of those of the community at large. It frequently happens, however, that different views are taken as to the respective interests of these classes on many important questions, some of which are even now before the House; but the noble Lord's bill, which professes adequately to represent those interests, will leave no political influence or power whatever to the great body of the manu-

facturers. Nor does it merely give an injurious monopoly of power to one division of society, highly respectable indeed as it is; but it will establish a most capricious, imaginary, and insulting distinction regarding the very class it comprehends within its own scheme. For example, of two men in the same pursuit, and with precisely the same means, the one being the father of a family, and who will therefore husband his resources in order to afford his children a decent education, will often be found in a house which will not entitle him to a vote; while the other, free from those expenses, can afford to live in a better situation, and will therefore have that privilege. Thus the man most interested in the national welfare, and who has given hostages to fortune and futurity, will have no voice, and he who is free from all the nearer ties of kindred and of country, will possess it. This kind of distinction, and a thousand others which will perpetually arise, totally inexplicable on any just principles of reason, will be equally irreconcilable with any just feelings in practice; *and will, if introduced, light up the torch of perpetual discord in every crowded community.*

“The noble Lord has, in reference to unanswerable objections which have been urged against the impracticability and expense of his plan, asked

whether those £10 renters or owners, who may be accidentally deprived of the franchise, will, without such remedies, be kept quiet? I ask the noble Lord how the £9, £8, or £7 renters, many of them of precisely the same class with some of the former, are to be “kept quiet” when they find themselves, in these liberal days, excluded from the franchise? For myself, I think, if alteration is to be made, a mixed system should be adopted in preference to the one proposed. I revere that constitution under which I have been born, and on the very grounds which I have now imperfectly stated, but which the best and most liberal writers as well as the firmest friends of liberty, have so often triumphantly put forth—I mean such men as Paley, as Sydney, and many others—namely, as effecting, by its diversified qualifications, a direct system of representation to every class among us above the rank of pauperism, and a virtual representation of the whole. I wish, indeed, to preserve that principle with those improvements in the system of which it is susceptible, so as to promote and secure the great national interests; but it seems to me, that while the framers of the present measure have taken away the influence which masses of property have long, and from the first possessed, they see at the same time that they cannot redress the balance of the

representative system which they have thus disturbed, without also sacrificing the ancient political rights of the humbler classes wherever they are found. These have always been my views, and I have expressed them before in this House ; and I will venture to tell the noble Lords opposite, that if they should carry their arbitrary measure, they will find my prophecy realized concerning it ; —that a system, professedly liberal, which thus prospectively annihilates the ancient rights of Englishmen in every place where they have been so long exercised and so deeply cherished ; conferring by the new scheme no equivalent ones in any part of the empire, will, instead of being a permanent settlement, expose, and in no long time, this, their new constitution, together with its authors, to the merited derision of the great mass of the British people.”

We have marked two or three passages in the above by *italic* type ; with reference to their clearly prophetic character. The exact fulfilment of their every circumstance, in the recent and continued movements of the Chartists, seems to us to present an instance of foresight, on the one side, and of striking accomplishment on the other, which stamps the character of the speaker as a statesman of the highest order.

But, as we have already observed,—the period over which we are now passing, is to be chiefly noted for the change which was rapidly and perceptibly taking place, in the general drift and tenor of Mr. Sadler's thoughts. From this time forward, the great question of the condition of the labouring poor, resumed its accustomed sway over his mind, and gave full occupation to his time. Six weeks had scarcely elapsed from his motion on Irish Poor Laws, when he brought before the House of Commons (on the 11th of Oct. 1831.) a subject of at least equal extent and importance;—namely, the grievances and wants of the English agricultural labourers. He obtained leave to bring in his Bill, but the prorogation which almost immediately took place, necessarily stopped its further progress; and in the following session the case of the factory-children burdened him with such absorbing occupation, as to preclude the possibility of resuming his former task.

The speech in which Mr. Sadler laid the wrongs of the agricultural poor before Parliament, is in his accustomed strain. It first establishes, by a long train of unquestionable facts, a fearful case of neglect and oppression; and then it proposes a practical remedy. If any one wished, at a single sitting, to understand distinctly the difference between the system of the

Political Economists, and that of Mr. Sadler, he could not do better than to read, consecutively, the speech of Lord Althorp, on proposing the New Poor Law; and that of Mr. Sadler to which we are at present referring. This comparison, too, would be a most favourable one for the Economists; for the noble Lord's unquestionable kindness of heart necessarily casts a warmth and mellowness of tint over the icy system of Malthus which it seldom receives. But after all, the pleading is that of WEALTH *against* POVERTY; while every word that ever fell from Mr. Sadler's lips, every thought that ever animated his soul, bore an exactly opposite tendency and direction.

We should be glad if our limits permitted us to insert the speech now before us unabridged; for it contains facts and arguments which are as much needed *now*, as they were at the moment of its delivery. That, however, is impossible; and we must merely select two or three of its most important passages.

Mr. Sadler begins by a natural reference to the then recent troubles among the agriculturists; troubles which, he was fully entitled to assume, shewed the existence of some deep-seated evil. The enquiry, then, naturally follows; To what mischiefs or grievances may these wide-spread

discontents be traced. And thus does he answer this enquiry :—

“ We live, Sir, in a period of great changes ; but none of them, whether completed or in progress, at all equal in any thing but name, the revolution which has taken place in the state and condition of our agricultural poor, in many parts of the country, and which has hardly ‘left a wreck behind’ of all their former prosperity and happiness. Long were they placed in an enviable situation, compared with those of any other country. From them our *moralists* drew their proofs of the equal dispensations of human happiness—our *poets*, their loveliest pictures of simple and unalloyed pleasures—our *patriots*, their best hopes as to the future destinies of the country ; while their humble abodes, the cottages of England, surrounded by the triumphs of their industry, were as distinguished by their beauty, as were their inmates for their cheerfulness and contentment. Hope still brightened this humble but happy condition, and the prospect of advancement in life was ever open to the peasant’s persevering industry, and to those dearer to him than himself, his children ; whom his exulting heart often beheld advancing to the very summits of society, to which they added dignity—the dignity of virtue and merit. Yes, Sir, I need

not remind the House, how many of those who have rendered immortal honour to their country—how many of your greatest merchants—how many laurelled and mitred heads, have sprung from the cottage. Such then, was the situation of this class; what is it at present? The “bold peasantry” of England, their country’s pride, are, generally speaking, now extinct!

“An ignorant and selfish system of spurious political economy, dictating first to the agricultural interest, has at length triumphed. I shall attend to some of its dicta hereafter; meantime let me now contrast the present condition to which the agricultural poor have been reduced, with that which I have described as enjoyed by them till its heartless dogmas prevailed. The system of demolition and monopoly, which has, in the emphatic language of the inspired volume, “laid house to house, and field to field, that they may stand alone in the earth,” has left no place for the poor; none for the little cultivator; none for the peasant’s cow; no not enough in one case in ten, for a garden. The best of the cottages have been demolished—“spurned indignant from the green,” as the loveliest of the poets of poverty, Goldsmith, sings. The lonely and naked hut into which they are now thrust, and for which is exacted an exorbitant rent, is destitute, both with-

out and within, of all that formerly distinguished their humble abodes ; is often unfit to stable even quadrupeds, and is frequently so crowded by different families, as to set not comfort merely, but decency at defiance, and render morality itself an impossible virtue. Thither, then, the unhappy parent, when employed, carries his wages, which, with the exception of a few short weeks in the year, are utterly inadequate to supply the necessities of a craving family. Wages, did I say ? Parish pay ! He is, perhaps sold by auction, as is the case in certain parishes, and therefore reduced to the condition of the slave, or driven to the workhouse, where he is often treated worse than a felon. Labour, meant to degrade and insult him, is often prescribed to him ; or, wholly unemployed, he sits brooding over his miserable fate ; winter labour, whether for himself or his wife and children, having been long since taken away. Perpetually insulted by false and heartless accusations,—for being a pauper, when his accusers have compelled him to become such,—for being idle, when his work has been taken from him,—for improvidence, when he can hardly exist,—he feels these insults barbed by past recollection.

“The very sympathies of his nature become reversed ; those who would once have constituted

his comforts and pleasures, his ragged and half-starved offspring, (who cannot stray a pace from his hovel without becoming trespassers and being severely treated as such,) and their wretched mother, increase his misery. He escapes, perhaps, from the scene of his distress, and attempts to lose the recollection of it and of himself, in dissolute and dangerous courses. Meantime, had some peculiar calamity, some inscrutable visitation of Providence reduced him to this condition, perhaps he might have sustained it with composure of spirit. But he knows otherwise. He can trace his sufferings and degradation to their true source. He knows by whom they have been inflicted upon him, and he feels what would be their cure, and can calculate how little it would cost others, to make him and his supremely happy. Meantime, the authors of his sufferings are those that insult him with demanding that he should be quiet and grateful,—that he should be contented and cheerful under them! “They that have wasted him, require mirth!” Not only are the falsest accusations levelled at him, but even the feelings common to nature are imputed to him as an offence; his marriage was a crime; his children are so many living nuisances; himself is pronounced ‘redundant;’ and, after having been despoiled of every advantage he once possessed,

he is kindly recommended as his best, and indeed only course, to transport himself for life, for the good of his oppressors, and to die unpitied and unknown in some distant wilderness! And this, Sir, is the condition at the present moment of thousands—of tens of thousands—of the labouring poor.”

Mr. S. then stops for a few moments, to demolish, in passing, some of the inventions of the Economists;—such as, “that the miseries of the labourers arose from their improvident marriages:” *The fact being*,—as he shewed from the population-returns,—that in those counties particularly denoted as the scenes of agricultural distress, the marriages were *fewer*, than in those in which no such distress appeared! *

Passing on, next, to the standing argument with the Economists,—the “redundancy of the population,”—he thus shews the prodigious folly of the assumption:

“I will now proceed to prove, and from the pages of the very report which has given its authority to so injurious an error, that, notwithstanding the discouragements to which labour has been subjected in this country, our rural population is not, even yet, redundant; and, in doing so,

* See Appendix (D.)

I will confine myself to the simple facts published in this report, and those will abundantly suffice to negative the conclusion at which the committee unhappily arrived. We find it there stated, that even as early as April, all the healthy labourers are employed; that April is a very busy time; and, that from thence to the termination of the harvest, the demand for labour increases, needs not to be mentioned; so much so, indeed, that on turning to the agricultural surveys, I find, that in the counties where so much is said of the redundancy of the labourers, even the hay-harvest could not be got in by the resident population without foreign assistance. But to come to the main question, and to determine it on the authority of the individual whom the committee very properly place at the head of their list of witnesses,—I mean Mr. M'Adam. To the first question put to him, he replies, that he has had very considerable experience in hiring labour in the country. The second query is this:—‘Have you found in general, that it is very easy to obtain labourers?’ The answer is,—‘Generally speaking, I have, excepting during the harvest-months; we then find a great scarcity of workmen.’ And yet, Sir, the committee talk about the redundancy of agricultural labourers! Nor is this all. The agricultural labourers are not only not redundant; they

are too few ! Were it not for a large accession of workmen at the period of the harvest, much of the produce of the land would never be secured. In addition to the influx of hands from towns and manufacturing districts, an immense assistance is also demanded annually from Ireland, or the harvests of England could neither be reaped nor gathered in. I need not, I presume, bring proofs of this fact, otherwise they are easily obtained. I have myself consulted some of the managers of our great steam-boat companies, and I find from them that there annually leave Ireland for the harvest-fields of Great Britain, a number which I cannot calculate at less than the entire male adult population employed as agricultural workmen in some five or six of our English counties, though they are dispersed, it is true, through the whole of our corn-districts. Now, if your fields could not be reaped, I need not say they would never be sown. It is, therefore, idle, worse than idle, for political economists, whether in this house or out of it, to rant about the redundancy of labour. It is not merely abhorrent to humanity, but to reason—it is an insult to truth—an outrage upon common sense. Does such an infatuated feeling prevail in any other case whatever ? Does the sportsman deem his horses and his dogs redundant in the summer months—the general call his sol-

diers superfluous while in their winter quarters? In the very commonest concerns of life, is any such delusion witnessed? But when we come to talk of our labourers, the political economist determines whether they are in excess or otherwise, not by the demand for them in the season of the year when they are essentially necessary, but in that, in which he imagines he can dispense with them altogether—a method of computation which would make out a case against them, as clearly as at present, were the population of the country reduced to a tenth of its present number! Nothing, then, can be more absurd and unjust than the present method of computing the alleged surplus of agricultural labourers. Under the best possible system, their labour will be less pressingly demanded in the winter than in the spring and harvest months. Nor is it, when duly considered, one of the least strikingly benevolent ordinations in nature,—that the hardest and most essential operations of husbandry have to be performed in the finest periods of the year, when the days are the most protracted, and the weather the most temperate. Hence, at all times, in every country, and under whatever system of cultivation, the ancient maxim will be found applicable, *hyems ignava colono*. In the natural order of things, other industrious occupations have been reserved

for this comparatively inactive and severe season, and have occupied it : of these, however, the industrious cottagers of England have been, in a great measure, bereft, by causes over which they had no control ; and this circumstance it is, that among many others, has occasioned much of the distress under which they labour, and has furnished the apology for these perpetual declamations as to their redundancy. Still, however, we cannot, in conformity with the new theory, annihilate them when we do not want their labour, because we cannot revive and multiply them when we do ; and nature has not indulged us with a human genus that can hibernate, or one which, after having secured the fruits of their industry, we can safely destroy when we have obtained its honey, as we once did their prototype, the bee. If, in short, we cannot gather in the kindly fruits of the earth, nor in due time enjoy them, without our full agricultural force ; then, Sir, notwithstanding all a selfish and stolid theory may repeat, *the labourer*, whom our present system has deprived of all his comforts, and degraded so deeply in his character and feelings, is, at the very season we have doomed him to idleness and want, and would bid him, if we could, to be gone, *as necessary to us as our daily bread.*”

From thus annihilating fictitious causes, he next

proceeds to exhibit the real ones, by which the almost intolerable miseries of the poor have been gradually brought about.

“In tracing, then, the causes which have led to the present degradation of the labourers in husbandry, I must, however it may startle the prejudices of some, commence with *the large farming system*. Reason, it might have been supposed, would have dictated another course—that, as the population of the country increased, the number of farmers should have augmented; or, as old Hobbes said, that “they should live closer and cultivate better.” But political economy, falsely so called, advised directly to the contrary; and, appealing, as it ever does, to human selfishness, prevailed. In this, however, as in most other cases, its principles have been falsified by experience, and its prophecies have totally failed. The land has become less productive in large divisions, as it ever does; less capital has been applied to it, for *labour is capital*. A less surplus produce has been obtained for the public, for this is determined by the fact, that a smaller rent is received by the landlord, and that less punctually and certainly; and, after all, the expense of keeping up a few additional farm-houses has been far more than counterbalanced by the great addition to the poor-rates, which the

farmer has taken care should at length fall upon the landlord. On this highly important and interesting topic, I had collected a considerable mass of statistical proofs ; but I cannot now presume even to enumerate them. I will, however, state, that the experience of every agricultural country is full and clear upon this point. In Flanders, the size of the farms has been consequently long limited by law ; but, as one of its most intelligent writers observes, the experience of the superiority of the minuter system has had the effect of still further curtailing their size, and multiplying their number. In Italy, where the state of cultivation is presented in such wide extremes, an able practical agriculturist of our own country, comes to this conclusion, that every state in the Peninsula is productive or otherwise, in proportion to the number of farmers on a given space of land, of equal quality. In France, such also is precisely the fact, as I can confidently assert, having most accurately examined the Cadastre, for that purpose. The fact is beginning also to be seen in England, and will be demonstrated more clearly every day, even by pecuniary considerations alone. I am not arguing that farms here should be limited by law ; or that they should all be reduced to one, and that a small extent : far otherwise. What I would contend for, is, the superiority of that modern and

mixed system of husbandry, which leaves the deserving peasantry of the country the opportunities and hopes of ultimate advancement; and this I believe to be far the most profitable state. That it is the happier one, as regards the great bulk of the people, not a doubt can exist. Hence, Paley classes among the deeds of benevolence, the *splitting of farms*.

“ But, Sir, what I have to do with the question at present, is, to show that the system ‘of engrossing great farms,’ to use Bacon’s expression, has been among the first of a series of connected causes which have led to the present degradation of our labouring poor. I shall not advert to past times, when the same practice is described by our authentic historians as having led to such fatal consequences; the present are sufficient for my purpose. No one can take up the work of any agricultural theorist, if published some time ago, but he will find the most pressing recommendations to the land-owners to increase the size of their farms, and the most tempting calculations to induce them so to do. Meantime, there was an equal unanimity as to the advantage of such a course, even to the little cultivators themselves; they were to do abundantly better as labourers than as small farmers. They valued indeed their independent state; they were reluctant—agonized

I may say, in every instance, at the thought of being driven from their holdings, but they were compelled to submit. The village Ahabs seized upon the vineyards of their industry, and their destruction was complete."

From the system of *engrossing farms*, he advances, next, to another wrong done to the poor, the *taking from them their commons*.

"The numerous class of little cultivators, or, as they might be called, independent or free labourers, being thus extinguished, let us trace their condition into that class whose numbers they greatly augmented—the dependent or servile labourers, as I fear they may be too justly denominated. Two ranks only existing, let us see next how these labourers have been treated, to whom such large and consoling promises had been held forth. Why, Sir, still the plea of public improvement was advanced,—improvement of which they were again to be the sole victims: I now allude to the manner in which the inclosures of the commons and wastes of the country were carried into effect, which comprised, within a comparatively short period of time, so large a part of the entire surface of the kingdom. I am not about to contend that inclosures should not have taken place; on the contrary, I would have had them become universally prevalent; one General

Inclosure Act, as was often urged, ought to have been passed for that purpose: then, as it was often said, the ancient and sacred rights of the poor labourers would have been secured, and just reservations made for them in mortmain, placed under the management of every parish—the only way of preserving their rights and privileges as a class; but, alas, all such inclosures were made by the wealthy and interested parties, and their humbler rights, equally recognised by justice and sound policy, were totally disregarded. I contend that the poor cottagers and labourers had an equitable, if not a legal right, agreeable to the known principles of the British laws. If it be argued that their claims could only be founded in many cases upon usurpations, as the law would denominate them, so it should be recollected are all the rights of property among us, at least as expounded by a fiction of that law. The tenants *in capite* encroached upon the crown; the lesser upon the greater barons; the smaller proprietors, especially the copyholders, upon the barons. Indeed, it is calculated by Barrington, in his work on our Ancient Statutes, that not many centuries ago, half the lands of England were held upon the degrading tenure of villainage; and that, without the state it implied, or the galling conditions it imposed, being abolished by statute, it gradu-

ally ceased by force of long usage. Thus has custom ratified those rights of possession which grew up imperceptibly amongst us, prescribing accordingly the appropriation of all property not yet in severalty. Thus, if a royal forest has to be inclosed, the contiguous parishes, or rather proprietors, demand their share, on the ground that they have depastured upon it. "They urge their claims, and have those claims allowed." But shall we not blush for ourselves and our country, when we observe at what precise point it is that this principle stops—that those essential rights, interests, advantages, call them what you please, which ought on every plea, whether of justice, humanity, or policy, to have been liberally considered and fully secured, have been altogether slighted and sacrificed; that land which had not been appropriated since it was created, was, when divided, dealt to the wealthy alone, and in shares proportioned to their wealth, to the total exclusion of the claims of the poor; and that in those cases where, according to Locke's doctrine, they had obtained a sort of natural right to their little cot, with its inclosure, by having obtained it by their own labour, and in some sort created it—even then, as he indignantly exclaims, the rich man, who possessed a whole county, seized when he pleased upon the cottage and garden of his poor

neighbour, in contempt of what, had they been as fully traced, and as well asserted, would have been found to be rights as sacred as his own. I am aware that I am now taking a most serious view of this subject. God forbid, however, that I should pursue this course with any other view than that of inducing the legislature to look into this matter, and then it will, I am sure, make some restitution (and moderate, indeed, will be all that I shall propose, and involving no sacrifice of property whatever) for the injuries sustained by the poor in this to them important matter. I shall therefore, persist in showing, on authorities as well conversant with the common law of the country and the rights in question as any, I think, that now exist; that the inclosures of the country, as they have been carried into effect, have been inconsistent with the principles of law as well as with equity and mercy. I will first quote the earliest legal authority, who wrote specially upon inclosing, or as he expresses it in the legal phrase which still survives, “approving”; and one who was also a practical agriculturist—Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, the celebrated lawyer and judge. He thus lays down the law on the occasion, in his book of surveying. “Every cottager sal have his portion assigned him, and then sal not the ryche man overpresse the poore man.” Sir Robert Cot-

ton, of the same profession, and who also wrote expressly upon the subject—inclosing, speaks thus:—"In the carriage of this business there must be much caution to prevent commotion;" he recommends, therefore, that "plots shall be devised to such inhabitants, and at and under easy values." Lord Chancellor Bacon, strenuously urging the same agricultural improvement, couples it, however, with this momentous condition:—"So that the poor commoners have no injury by such inclosures." The total neglect, however, of their rights in all such proceedings called forth the strongest reprobation of a succeeding Chancellor, who termed the system as pursued—"a crime of a crying nature."

"I have adverted to Locke's energetic expressions on the subject, and shall pass over many others, only adducing one more authority of a modern date, and of an official character. It is that of a report, (drawn up, I believe, by the excellent and patriotic Sir John Sinclair,) of a Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed for the special purpose of considering the subject, which clearly recognises these rights of the poor, and most strongly recommends that they should be secured. "If," says the report, "a general bill were to be passed, every possible attention to the rights of the commoners

would necessarily be paid. The poor would then evidently stand a better chance of having their full share undiminished." I will not multiply these authorities; suffice it to say, that all such have held the privileges the poor formerly possessed in the light of sacred rights, and have earnestly contended for the necessity of their preservation; these, however, have been now almost entirely wrested from them by a series of private inclosure bills; inflicting upon them, as a class, the most irreparable injuries. Inclosures indeed might have been so conducted as to have benefitted all parties; but now, coupled with other features of the system, they form a part of what Blackstone denominates a "fatal rural policy;" one which has completed the degradation and ruin of your agricultural poor. Formerly the industrious labourer had this means of advancement; to this remaining privilege, also, the ejected little farmer could resort, but at the same time and under the same system, that some village monopolist seized upon his fields, he drove him also from the waste.

"If to some common's fenceless limits strayed,
He drives his flocks to pick the scanty blade;
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And e'en the bare-worn common is denied."

Now, Sir, it was from the first so obvious, not-

withstanding all the interested and selfish declarations to the contrary, that inclosures, as they were carried into effect, would be greatly injurious to the industrious and agricultural poor, that it hardly seems necessary to prove how entirely their fears have been verified. I will, however, just mention, that the report of a committee on inclosures, in 1808, states, that the results which were the subject of examination in a tour of 1600 miles, made for that purpose, proved that they had been clearly injurious to the poor. An intelligent witness informs another committee of this house, (that on the high price of provisions,) that he had himself been a commissioner under twenty inclosure acts, and states his opinion as to their general effect on the poor, lamenting that he had been thereby accessory to injuring two thousand people, at the rate of twenty families per parish. I fear, Sir, the reply of a poor fellow to Arthur Young, the great advocate of inclosures (though under regulations which would indeed have rendered them a benefit to all parties) recorded in one of his agricultural surveys, is true to a more or less degree, of every industrious labourer in England, wherever these *improvements* have taken place. To his query as to whether the inclosure had injured him, he replied, “ Sir, before the inclosure I had a good garden, kept

two cows, and was getting on ; now, I cannot keep so much as a goose, and am poor and wretched, and cannot help myself ; and still you ask me, if the inclosure has hurt me !”

A third, and most grievous evil, is next pointed out, in the *destruction of the cottages of the poor*.

“ Another, and if possible, a still deeper injury which it has also perpetrated, still remains to be noticed. Not only has the little farm been monopolized, the common right destroyed, the garden, in many instances, seized, but the cottage itself demolished ; and the plough-share now drives over many a little plot where once stood the bower of contented labour. A few blooming shrubs are still seen twining round the fence ; and here and there a flower, tenacious of the soil, blossoms in its season upon the spot which was once the abode of peace and happiness ; like those which grow upon the grave of some forgotten, but once-loved being, though the hand which planted them is gone for ever. I am presenting, Sir, no imaginary or solitary cases ; no, these demolitions have been, as Lord Winchelsea observed to the Board of Agriculture, many years ago, most numerous : and, not content with the opportunities these inclosures gave them, the great agriculturists have, in not a few instances, combined and subscribed to forward

this work of destruction ; and it has even been gravely propounded as a question in this house, or at least in its committees, whether direct legal means ought not to be employed to hasten it forwards. There has been no occasion—the work is accomplished. Those have prevailed who have pronounced the labouring poor to be redundant ; and whose *nests*, therefore, as *human vermin*, were to be cleared ; hence their humble abodes have been demolished. The foxes, indeed, might have holes, and the birds of the air, nests—but these Christian philosophers would not let a poor man have where to lay his head. Hence, their present cottages are often of a most wretched description ; ‘ spurned indignant from the green,’ they are placed at a distance, so as to ‘ screen the presence of contiguous pride ;’ miserably deficient in necessary accommodation, almost always destitute of a good and sufficient garden : in a word, the wretched inmates, and the hovels into which they are thrust, are worthy of each other—miserable to the last degree. But, further, there are not enough of them : hence, more than one family are often thrust into the same dwelling, to the utter destruction of all peace, comfort, and decency. Sir, on this most important point I proceed to prove what I assert, not by vague authorities, or opinions in pamphlets and

books on political economy; but by authentic and indisputable facts, which at once decide the subject. I shall take the first county which is presented to us in the Report, and which seems, on the testimony of one of the witnesses, to be well entitled to that bad pre-eminence, namely, Suffolk. Suffolk, Sir, has, in the course of 120 years, increased in population, including the great increase of some of its towns, as much as 80 per centum, and rather more. What has been the increase in the accommodation for the poorer part of the population? Why, Sir, in 1690, there were 47,537 houses in that county; in 1821, then, there ought to have been at least 90,000 houses. But, alas, Sir, there were in the latter year only 42,773 inhabited houses, the absolute number being 11 per cent. fewer than 130 years before! The whole of the six counties so selected exhibited a result, in this respect, not quite so appalling, but sufficiently distressing, however regarded. Their population had, from 1701 to 1821, advanced upwards of 75 per cent. but the houses for its accommodation less than 25. It is unnecessary to remark on what class the misery of such a state of things would be made to rest. Even in counties supposed by the Committee free from this state of things, ‘th’ infection works.’ I hold in my hand the invaluable

pamphlet of the Vicar of Alford, in Lincolnshire, who enumerates fifteen neighbouring parishes, in which he found, on diligent inquiry, that the agricultural cottages demolished since 1770, amount to 176, and that *nine only* have been built since that period ! But to return to one of the former counties ; I will present to this house, in the instance of a single parish, and that not one selected for the occasion, the facts and consequences of such a system. It is described in a letter to the Vicar of a place which I shall not name, but an extract from which I shall read to the house. It is situated in one of the disturbed districts. ‘ During the last forty years,’ says the reverend gentleman, ‘ four cottages only have been built by ———, and even these in lieu of the same number taken or fallen down. The accommodation for the poor is far more confined than it was some years past. The old parsonage, which I rebuilt when I came to the living, I found inhabited by four pauper families. There were, also, a short time previously, five pauper families, in two farm-houses, now occupied again by farmers. The want of room, therefore, has created the greatest difficulties to the overseers, and has rendered their office peculiarly painful. For several weeks they have been compelled to quarter a poor family

at a public-house, two of the young men being under the necessity of sleeping in a barn. In some of the cottages, the poor are so huddled together, that the sight is most distressing, and the effect, of course, very demoralising. The following is a specimen :—

<i>Cottage.</i>	<i>Families.</i>	<i>Persons.</i>	<i>Accommodations.</i>
No. 1 - - -	2 - - -	10 - - -	1 ground floor, 2 bed rooms.
2 - - -	2 - - -	8 - - -	1 room only, 12 feet square.
3 - - -	2 - - -	7 - - -	1 room ground floor, 12½ feet square. Two girls obliged to sleep on the ground floor
4 - - -	1 - - -	9 - - -	1 room ground floor, 1 bed room.
5 - - -	1 - - -	7 - - -	1 room only, 12 feet square.
6 - - -	2 - - -	11 - - -	1 room ground floor, 2 bed rooms.
7 - - -	0 - - -	11 - - -	Different Individuals, all females, except a youth of 18 and a young boy. 1 room ground floor; 1 bed room.
8 - - -	0 - - -	9 - - -	Different Individuals.

He goes on to say, ‘ Most of these cottages are in a sad state of repair; and all, with the exception of the two last, which are parish houses, belong to the Lord of the Manor.’ He says that he made application to the non-resident proprietor (to whose benevolence of *intention*, however, he bears testimony), and to his agent, but could obtain no redress of this grievous state of

things; as the latter had come to the determination (a very usual one) that no additional cottage should be built—of course giving the orthodox reason for the refusal. I cannot refrain from quoting him a little further, as what follows has a most special reference to the only apology which can be urged for this mass of misery—a supposed surplus of numbers. ‘The overseers assure me,’ he adds, ‘that there are not more labourers than the cultivation of the land requires—nay, that should the use of the thrashing machine be discontinued, there would not be sufficient.’ He proceeds to make some pertinent and touching remarks upon this state of things, and its inevitable consequences, and concludes by suggesting a measure of relief, which I had long ago regarded as essential to any plan whatever, which contemplates the bettering the condition of the poor; namely, a restoration of their cottages to some extent. He intimates, that the condition of the poor in the neighbourhood is, at least, quite as bad, and must, sooner or later, produce the most lamentable and alarming consequences. Sir, I will beg the house to consider some of these consequences. Not only early and general depravity, but crimes of the most fearful nature are thus generated. [Here Mr. S. related a case of the most appalling kind, the

details of which are unfit for publication.] But not to dwell on this horrid subject, what, I ask, must be the usual consequences, when different families are thus thrust into the same hole as a sleeping apartment; and, immorality out of the question, how can decency be preserved, especially under certain circumstances, in the family, in such cases?"

Besides these main causes of distress, the minor evils were briefly adverted to; arising from—the altered custom of hiring by the week instead of by the year—the introduction of machinery,—and the loss of the in-door work of the female cottager, by the progress of machine manufactures. These subsidiary circumstances were not to be counted as grievances or acts of oppression; but they helped to increase the hardships created by the former and more intolerable evils.

Having thus pourtrayed the fearful malady with which he had to grapple, Mr. S. next proceeded to describe his proposed remedies. And here our simplest course is to quote his whole scheme in his own words.

"Sir, the measure I am about to propose is not, if I may so express myself, a *tentative* one, a plan of mere experiment; it is founded upon no new discoveries in human nature or policy; no novel or untried expedients; no distant or

doubtful remedies. It does not contemplate to send off the thews and sinews of the country to the antipodes, the equator, or the pole, in search of relief. Nor does it include the locating of our labouring poor upon our waste lands, though that scheme, carried into practice to a certain extent, I hold to be a much wiser and more patriotic scheme than many usually recommend regarding them. As a general plan of relief, I think it is, however, liable to some objections, which I shall not now state. The plan I propose, contemplates to repair the injuries which our labouring poor have sustained, in the scenes where they have been inflicted, to the equal advantage of every class of the community; and by means, as I hope to show, perfectly simple and practicable, and imposing, permanently considered, no burthen whatsoever upon us in its execution. There will be no novelty in any of my propositions, except that of requiring *that* legislature which has been in some measure an accessory to the injuries of the poor, to afford those facilities which shall render them universal; and the miseries of your agricultural poor, and the insubordination which they occasion, are at an end.

“First, I propose that a certain number of cottages should be rebuilt in those parts of the country where they are most wanted; which being the only

part of the measure demanding an outlay worth a thought, I had for some time meant to have postponed ; but after due consideration of the subject myself, and having had numerous communications with others most impressed with the present condition of the poor, I came to the conclusion, that no plan whatever, for the relief of our agricultural poor, has the least chance of affording them any adequate relief, if this proposition be omitted. A cottage, according to a calculation I have made, might be erected, and have, at least, its rood of ground around it as a garden, and let to the cottager at 50s. per annum, and still pay a higher interest than any other description of real or even funded property among us. Still less would be the cost, were government, without sacrificing any real income, to facilitate the measure as I may hereafter suggest. Here there is accommodation of an infinitely superior kind to that now usually enjoyed, affording a rent which would allow ample reservations for repairs or other purposes ; at one-half, nay, one-third, of the sum usually paid to the thoughtless sub-landlord, or griping speculator, whom the present system allows to live upon the poor-rates, rather than the pauper labourer whom he makes his agent for that purpose. The erection of even a very few of these cottages

where they are most needed, would not, I hardly need say, merely afford so many additional and improved accommodations to the degraded poor, though even in doing that, the benefit would be incalculable; but, Sir, these would inevitably have a most surprising and gratifying effect upon the rest, in improving the accommodations, and consequently, the morals and comforts of the poor: secondly, in greatly lessening their extortionate rents: and thirdly, in proportionally reducing the poor's rates, a large part of which, in many places, goes to make good these infamous exactions. The difficulty of raising means, in this land of wealth and humanity, for so humble an effort, I will not for one moment regard. Four methods I have contemplated, all of which I am confident would be available, and any one of which would amply suffice for the purpose; but should these all fail, where would be the difficulty of government granting a small loan, secured by the respective parishes at the usual interest; which parishes would possess the property, to their own great and obvious advantage, as well as to that of the poor? For this plan, so important to the poor in every possible point of view, not one farthing, then, would be given, not one farthing risked, by either the parish or the country.

“The second feature of my measure, Sir, is still more easy : it is this—the giving, or rather, restoring, by the means and in the manner I shall speedily point out, to the labouring poor—at least, to those deserving and desirous of advantage—gardens, not gratuitously, indeed, but at the full value at which lands are let where they are situate, and no more. Sir, this simple restitution would effect of itself wonders in their behalf ; the revival of cottage horticulture would yield additional employment to the peasant, and especially at those seasons of the year when he is now often without it ; would increase his comforts, and go far to restore him plenty at all seasons. By gardens, I mean not the barren and overshadowed patch, that may still sometimes be left at the back or in front of some of the ruinous cottages of the country, sufficient, perhaps, to grow a shrub or two on which the wretched inmates can hang a few rags to dry ;—such, Sir, only mock and tantalize the industry which they can neither excite nor reward. Such will, and ought to be, neglected. I mean by a garden, a good and sufficient garden. For, when we consider the state of the poor, their involuntary idleness and wretchedness, and the moral and political consequences of their condition, and know that this one pursuit would relieve them and the

country of many of the evils under which both now labour—were the poor destitute of any wish to avail themselves of it, no national sacrifice could be too great, hardly any sum (burthened as the country is) too vast, could a decided taste for horticulture be purchased for our agricultural poor. But, Sir, the poor of England *have* this taste—this passion, I may even call it in them, for gardening, beyond any other people on earth. What will they not do to gratify it, even now that the inclosures of the country have rendered it almost impossible for them so to do? Who has not seen the thousands of little strips which the poor labourers have taken in by the road-sides in this country, the labour of inclosing which, estimated at the lowest wages, is often many times the worth of the narrow plot thus obtained; though the industrious tenants know that they are at any time liable to have their plot seized, and are certain that, at some time or other, it will be so? Few of the poor, however, have the opportunity, or would have the permission, to obtain even this little advantage; it is true, the great farmers may allow them occasionally the temporary possession of a distant headland, on which to plant a few potatoes. But, Sir, this, wherever situated, is not the advantage I ask for this class; it is the garden, properly so called, which the husbandman can

call his own, in which he can display his taste, and which he can cultivate as he pleases ; and where, surrounded by his family, he labours not only for present but prospective advantages ; where the feelings of hope and the consciousness of prosperity are alive within him, rendering him as happy as his master ;—feelings, which alas ! are seldom gratified. But I will proceed with this subject no further. The poor, every one must know, have the taste in question. They are fully aware of the pleasures and advantages attending its gratification, and they bitterly complain of having been dispossessed of the possibility of doing so. They have, in thousands of instances, besought their superiors to restore to them their garden, as in other days. They have constantly prayed for this great favour. It has been denied. “ They mourn in their prayer, and are vexed.” I have here a calculation, made by one of the ablest of our agricultural writers, of the advantages, estimated in the most moderate way possible, of a good garden to the industrious labourer ; but I have not time to give them, important and interesting as they are. Still, I would not rest here. No advantages, however valuable, if indiscriminately extended, would fully answer the ends we ought to have in view, regarding this class ; nor indeed, can any rank of society, no,

nor any individual, whatever be his pursuit, be incited to those becoming exertions, on which human prosperity, individual and national, depends, without holding out further adequate inducements and rewards to successful efforts. I would then, propose as a reward and distinction to the deserving poor, what would indeed be to them no empty honour, but the highest possible advantage, though still it would involve no pecuniary sacrifices whatever. I would restore to such the opportunity of keeping on customary terms, their cow. These cottagers would have to be selected for their good conduct, industrious habits, and honest endeavours to bring up their families without parochial relief. They would have to be admitted tenants of little intakes, or to depasture upon a general allotment, and having a meadow appropriated for the purpose of providing them with hay. Either of these plans might be adopted, and both of them have been so, with great success; that, however, which gives the cottager his own share in severalty, is undoubtedly to be preferred.

“ I have contemplated the difficulty which, in certain instances, the most industrious of our labourers would have, in raising sufficient money for this purpose. This difficulty, however, is more apparent than real, and may be obviated, as I will

on another occasion shew, when I hope to enter more into the details, and less into the principle of the measure, with equal advantage to all parties. A point far more material to mention is, that the measure contemplates securing the advantages proposed, whether for keeping the cow or the garden, at the current and usual terms of land of equal quality in the same district, and let by the same owners. And I am ashamed of acknowledging how necessary is this provision; otherwise, that extortion to which the poor are now exposed, would pursue them again. I have ascertained, beyond all doubt, that in those few instances where the poor now obtain, or have been suffered to retain, the advantages in question, they too frequently pay for them, on the average, more than double what is demanded from the larger tenants in the immediate neighbourhood! This advantage secured to the little cultivator, I will engage for the effects. Happiness will be conferred on the class in question, and their superiors will also be rewarded; for to the arguments which justice and generosity suggest, those which self-interest supplies may be fairly added. This plan would diminish the burden of the poor-rates, now so very heavily felt in many of the agricultural districts of this country; and this most important consequence, I proceed to shew

would take place, from instances in which a similar plan has been put into operation by means of private benevolence. The instance I shall first adduce is that which occurred in the parish of Long Newton, in the county of Gloucester, where the excellent and benevolent father of the present member for the university of Oxford, the late Mr. Estcourt, stated, that, out of 196 persons, thirty-two families, consisting of 140 persons, were poor, and indeed, in the depth of extreme poverty, to use his own words. The poor rates amounted to £324. 13s. 6d. In order to extricate them from this state of misery and wretchedness, he adopted a plan in some respects similar to the plan I now propose,—and what have been the consequences? An immediate abatement in the misery of the poor; the most gratifying improvement in their character and morals; and a progressive diminution in the poor-rates, down to £135 in 1829 (the last year reported) amounting to 10d. in the pound only, on the valuation of the parish in 1815. In Skiptonmoyne, an adjoining parish, where the same course is pursued, I find the poor rates have diminished between 1813 and 1829, from £367 to little more than £209 on the last three years. In the small parish of Ashley, where the present excellent Member for Oxford University has also pursued the same course since

1812, I find that the poor rates, which then stood at £89 in the year 1813, have now dropped to £55, or 10½d. in the pound. In other parishes the same effect is producing, under the same auspicious direction.

“ But, perhaps, it may be said, that every plan of benevolence, of whatever character or description, is found to answer under the warm and enthusiastic manangement of its patron. To show that this system of benevolence does not depend upon mere superintendence ; I will, lastly, give another instance (the parish of Lyndon, in Rutland,) where the cottagers have been allowed these privileges for at least two hundred years ; for at that time an inclosure took place, and the then owners had the good sense and humanity to reserve a small allotment for the purpose of letting it to the cottagers at moderate rents. A gentleman who communicated to the Board of Agriculture, about thirty years ago, through Lord Winchilsea, says, as a natural consequence of such a system—“ We can therefore hardly say that there are any industrious persons here who are really poor, as there are in places where they have not this advantage.” This communication was made in 1796,* and I have

* See *Appendix* (E.)

been anxious to see the effect of this system, imperfect as it is in some respects, on the poor-rates. I find that, on the average of the last seventeen years, namely, during the period in which we have had annual returns, the amount averaged £25. 4s. 8d. only ; or, on the valuation of 1815, rather more than 4½d. in the pound ; or perhaps a penny in the pound on the value of the whole produce of the parish. Would the most parsimonious manager of the poor require a less demand upon the national or parochial funds than this? (The honourable member adduced two other instances, one of a village in Lincolnshire, and another in Worcestershire, where the same management had produced equally beneficial results.) I had meant to have given some equally authentic proofs of the individual happiness this system creates, wherever it has been partially introduced ; but time will not admit. To the poor in particular, to use the language of a most intelligent correspondent of the Board of Agriculture, “ the advantage is so great, as to baffle all description.” *May it be the business of this house, as it is its evident duty, to make that happiness universal.*”

We shall add only Mr. Sadler’s brief peroration, and then conclude the subject.

“ Sir, I would fain hope that in this house, the condition of the poor will still meet anxious con-

sideration—that here, their wrongs will find redress. The suggestions of private benevolence, aided, indeed, by the soundest views of policy and interest, have long been urged in vain ; their wrongs have gone on increasing, and will never be redressed, except this house interfere. Let it do so then, and without delay ; let wealth allow to industry which incessantly labours for its benefit, a comfortable abode, wherein to rest. Let those who demand their summer toil, give them the means of employment and subsistence in the winter season, *lest the cry of them that have reaped our fields, come up before the Lord of the harvest* ; that Deity who is no respecter of persons ; or, if He be, who is the respecter of the poor and needy. If feelings of justice and gratitude no longer sufficiently prevail, let those of just apprehension and awakened fear be added. Recollect the mighty power with which we have to deal. Like another Samson, we deem it blind, and doom it to grind at the mill, for our pleasure and convenience ; but let the economists and politicians take care how they sport much longer with its unawakened feelings, lest the spirit of vengeance and of strength return upon it, and it bow itself mightily against the pillars of your unrighteous system, and destroy the social structure, though itself

perish in the ruins. Sir, I trust, this House will listen to the suggestions of kindness and benevolence; that it will support a measure which demands the permanent sacrifice of none of the property of the country, but which, on the contrary, would greatly lighten the burthens it now sustains, and above all, would give prosperity and peace to our rural poor. Let the House then assume its noblest character, that of the *protector of the poor*, and seeing that the suggestions of humanity and the dictates of policy have long been disregarded, let the law once more interpose its sacred shield, and protect the defenceless and the wretched from the miseries which they have too long endured."

From this rapid review of one of Mr. Sadler's plans, two observations seem naturally to arise.

1. How total and universal is the opposition existing, between a really philanthropic system, such as that of Mr. Sadler, and the whole series of schemes and propositions emanating from the Malthusian or Economists' school.

Within the last twenty years a number of persons of the latter class, possessed of discernment enough to perceive the disorder and derangement which has been spreading among the industrious portions of the community, have tendered, in

various ways, their counsel, as to the best method of remedying these unquestionable evils. One of these boldly went the whole length of Malthusianism, and proposed, in Parliament, to enact a penal law against marriage ; penal at least so far as this, that every poor man who ventured to marry after a certain day to be fixed, should do it on peril of seeing his children, in any period of distress, perish before his face ; all claim to relief being, by statute, formally taken away. The reception given to this proposal being but a cool one, another more charitably proposes to a Parliamentary Committee, to print heaps of tracts on “ the principles of population,” for distribution among the boys and girls of the working classes ; sagely expecting, by these little books, to deter the said boys and girls from doing anything having a tendency “ to burden the market of labour,” by augmenting “ the already redundant population.” This wiseacre of course got laughed at ; in spite of which, societies “ for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge” were formed, and a variety of stories and tracts against marriage were pushed into circulation. Later still, we have had Emigration-nostrums in abundance ; and the latest fancy of all seems to be, to provide the poor with playgrounds and gymnasiums, (!) without, however, attempting to do any one thing to relieve them

from the necessity of working thirteen or fourteen hours a-day, to get bread for their children !

Now some of these schemes have emanated from men of talent, and some of them from men of humanity. And yet, such is the besotting influence of the Malthusian theory, that the humane men have been found to propose some of the most cruel,—the clever men some of the most absurd, of all schemes that ever have been concocted. And amidst the whole, including a great number of propositions, in the long course of twenty years,—not one proposal was ever made, even in a quarter of a century, which so much as contemplated the giving to the poor man the solid value of a single shilling ! Various things were to be *taken away* ; marriage was to be made a prohibited thing ; home and children were to be removed out of reach ;—or, if the schemer were kindhearted, he might propose to give the poor man “ population-tracts,” or a “ gymnasium :” but the *first*, and we believe the only person, in a quarter of a century, who so much as mooted the idea, of giving any *substantial relief*, any real boon, to the people, was Michael Thomas Sadler.

One great practical difference between these schemers, and such a man as Mr. Sadler, consisted in this,—that the tendency and drift of his mind ever was, *to do something for*,—to *bestow some-*

thing upon,—those who were in need. Whereas the bias among the Economists seem to be, (we speak of the masters of that school, and by no means of *all* their scholars,) to deal with the poor as with locusts, or vermin, and by every plan, to cut them short, and to reduce their numbers. Thus, when an examination of the several conditions of the labourer and the pauper were gone into, and it appeared that there was far too slight a difference between the two,—the Malthusian and the Sadlerian would instantly propose remedies diametrically opposed to each other. The follower of Malthus would exclaim, “How abominable! that the pauper should fare as well as, or better than, the hard-working man. Let his provision be immediately *reduced*.” The disciple of Mr. Sadler, on the other hand, would say, “How shocking! that the honest and industrious labourer, should fare no better than the idle pauper! Let us see whether something cannot be done, to *raise* his condition.” The one arguing from this unjust equality, in favor of *taking something from* the pauper;—the other, from the same circumstance, in favor of *giving something to* the labourer.

Such was the drift and governing principle of the proposition we have now been considering. Seeing the undeniable fact;—that many privileges

and advantages had been taken from the working man, in the course of the last half-century, and that by these reductions he had been left in a state of hopeless, helpless poverty, with no apparent way of raising himself, by any conceivable exertion or skill,—Mr. Sadler's first attempt was, to hold out a friendly hand, and to afford to the labourer some opportunity of extricating himself from the poverty with which he was on every side surrounded. His object was, to act on the poor man by the powerful motive of *hope*. The only motive ever used by the Economists, in their endeavours to improve the condition of the poor, is the opposite one of *fear*. Which is the most humane of the two, and which the wisest, it does not seem difficult to determine.

2. And this naturally gives rise to another reflection; which we should rejoice to be able to convey to the minds of the great body of the industrious classes;—namely, that it is a gross delusion and a fraud, which would impose upon them, as their real or their only friends, certain parties whose chief characteristic is, a noisy zeal on the democratic side on all political controversies.

Now the broad fact ought to be generally understood, and seriously thought upon;—that not one of the mouth-pieces of this party—call-

ing itself “liberal,”—has ever been found to propose, or even to second, with zeal and efficiency, any real boon to the people. Political *power*, indeed, they are always ready to accord, or anything else that *costs nothing*. But tell these same patriots that the poor have personal and pecuniary rights, as well as political ones;—that it is far better for a labourer to have a good cottage and garden, than to have a vote for the county; and you will speedily find that in helping the poor in this real and tangible manner, none are more backward than those who are always fond of proclaiming themselves “the friends of the working classes.” And, on the other hand, the man whose whole time and thoughts were given to plans and propositions of this kind, was one of those whom it is customary, in the ordinary slang of the “liberal” prints, to hold up to popular abhorrence as a “bigot,” a “borough-monger,” and a “high Tory.”

CHAPTER XI.

A. D. 1831—2.

THE CASE OF THE FACTORY CHILDREN.

WE have now arrived at an important period in Mr. Sadler's Life. In the matter of Irish Poor Laws, while he felt the progress actually made towards success, it was not permitted him to see, in his own days, the practical result of his labours. Nor, although he had an innate consciousness, amounting to perfect certainty, of his victory over the Malthusian system,—was his life prolonged to behold the utter vanishing of that system, as we have since witnessed it; until at present, no man is found of sufficient boldness to avow himself a disciple of the once honored master of political economy. But, in the matter of which we are about to speak, certain great and important steps, though falling utterly short of the whole necessity of the case, were actually

taken in his own life-time ; and a system of legislation, and of continual watchfulness established, which promised further advances in years to come. Hence we may naturally consider THE FACTORY QUESTION to be especially one of those subjects, upon which Mr. Sadler's well-earned fame mainly rests.

This topic was in no degree new to him. It had long been his fixed intention, immediately he had fairly opened the case of the Agricultural Labourers,—to follow it by an appeal to Parliament on the grievances of the Factory Operatives. But, on his return into Yorkshire in the autumn of 1831, he received such applications from various friends, on the subject of the oppressions suffered by the latter class, as induced him to betake himself to a complete investigation of the existing state of the case ; the results of which impelled him to bring the subject before the legislature at the earliest possible period.

He accordingly asked and obtained leave, on the 15th of December 1831, to bring in a Bill “for regulating the labour of children and young persons in the Mills and Factories of this country ;”—and having framed his measure, and had it printed, he moved its second reading, on the 16th of March 1832, in a speech of some length, and which, according to the practice of the House,

explained the necessity, and asserted the fitness of the proposition so submitted to it.

It is not too much to say of this address, that while a more closely-reasoned or convincing argument never was produced,—none, even of Mr. Sadler's own productions, is more redolent of deep and strong feeling, excited, not by fancy, but by fact. We must, as before, offer several large extracts; inasmuch as, without such, our readers would obtain but an imperfect view of one of the greatest efforts of Mr. Sadler's life.

He opens, according to his usual habit, by reviewing and clearing away, the main difficulties started by opponents. The first of these, is the current cry of the capitalist, "Let us alone—no legislation on matters affecting the market of labour." With this objection Mr. S. thus deals:—

"The Bill which I now implore the House to sanction with its authority, has for its object the liberation of children and other young persons employed in the mills and factories of the United Kingdom, from that over-exertion and long confinement which common sense, as well as experience, has shown to be utterly inconsistent with the improvement of their minds, the preservation of their morals, and the maintenance of their health;—in a word, to rescue them from a state of suffering and degradation, which it is

conceived the children of the industrious classes in hardly any other country have ever endured.

“I am aware that some gentlemen profess, upon principle, a great reluctance to legislate upon these matters ; holding such interference to be an evil. So, I reply, is all legislation,—upon whatever subject,—and an evil only to be tolerated for the purpose of preventing some greater one ; I shall therefore content myself with meeting this objection, common as it is, by simply challenging those who urge it to show us a case which has stronger claims for the interposition of the law ; whether we regard the nature of the evil to be abated, as affecting the individuals, society at large, and posterity ; or the utter helplessness of those on whose behalf we are called on to interfere ; or, lastly, the fact—which experience has left no longer in doubt, that, if the law does not, there is no other power that can or will adequately protect them.

“But, I apprehend, the strongest objections that will be offered on this occasion, will be grounded upon the pretence that the very principle of the Bill is an improper interference between the employer and the employed, and an attempt to regulate by law the market of labour. Were that market supplied by free agents, properly so denominated, I should fully participate in these

objections. Theoretically, indeed, such is the case, but practically, I fear, the fact is far otherwise, even regarding those who are of mature age ; and the boasted freedom of our labourers in many pursuits will, on a just view of their condition, be found little more than a name. Those who argue the question upon mere abstract principles, seem, in my apprehension, too much to forget the condition of society : the unequal division of property, or rather its total monopoly by the few ; leaving the many nothing but what they can obtain by their daily labour ; which very labour cannot become available for the purposes of daily subsistence, without the consent of those who own the property of the community,—all the materials, elements, call them what you please, on which labour can be bestowed, being in their possession. Hence it is clear that, excepting in a state of things where the demand for labour fully equals the supply (which it would be absurdly false to say exists in this country), the employer and the employed do not meet on equal terms in the market of labour ; on the contrary, the latter, whatever be his age, and call him as free as you please, is often almost entirely at the mercy of the former ;—he would be wholly so, were it not for the operation of the poor-laws, which are a palpable interference with the market

of labour, and condemned as such by their opponents. Hence is it that labour is so imperfectly distributed, and so inadequately remunerated; that one part of the population is over-worked, while another is wholly without employment; evils which operate reciprocally upon each other, till a community which might afford a sufficiency of moderate employment for all, exhibits at one and the same time, part of its members reduced to the condition of slaves by over-exertion, and another part to that of paupers by involuntary idleness. In a word, wealth, still more than knowledge, is power; and power, liable to abuse wherever vested, is least of all free from tyrannical exercise, when it owes its existence to a sordid source.

“But in showing how far even adults are from being free agents, in the proper meaning of the term, and, on the contrary, how dependent for their employment, and consequently their daily bread, upon the will of others, I have prepared the way for the conclusion, that children, at all events, are not to be regarded as free labourers; and that it is the duty of this House to protect them from that system of cruelty and oppression to which I shall presently advert. The common-place objection, that the parents are free agents, and that the children therefore ought to be regarded as

such, I apprehend has but little force. It is, however, so often and so confidently urged, that I shall be excused for giving it some attention.

“The parents who surrender their children to this infantile slavery may be separated into two classes. The first, and I trust by far the most numerous one, consists of those who are obliged, by extreme indigence, so to act, but who do it with great reluctance and bitter regret: themselves perhaps out of employment, or working at very low wages, and their families in a state of great destitution;—what can they do? The overseer, as is in evidence, refuses relief if they have children capable of working in factories whom they object to send thither. They choose therefore what they probably deem the lesser evil, and reluctantly resign their offspring to the captivity and pollution of the mill: they rouse them in the winter morning, which, as a poor father says before the Lords’ Committee, they “feel very sorry” to do;—they receive them fatigued and exhausted, many a weary hour after the day has closed;—they see them droop and sicken, and in many cases become cripples and die, before they reach their prime: and they do all this, because they must otherwise suffer unrelieved, and starve, like Ugolino, amidst their starving children. It is mockery to contend that these parents have

a choice; that they can dictate to, or even parley with, the employer as to the number of hours their child shall be worked, or the treatment it shall be subject to in his mill; and it is an insult to the parental heart to say that they resign it voluntarily: No, “their poverty, and not their will, consents.” Consents, indeed! but often with tears, as Dr. Ashton, a physician familiar with the whole system, informed the committee; a noble member of which observed to one of the poor parents then examined, who was speaking of the successive fate of several of his children, whom he had been obliged to send to the factory—“You can hardly speak of them without crying?” The answer was “No!” and few, I should suppose, refrained from sympathizing with him, who heard his simple but melancholy story. Free agents! To suppose that parents are free agents while dooming their own flesh and blood to this fate, is to believe them monsters!

“But, Sir, there are such monsters; unknown indeed in the brute creation, they belong to our own kind, and are found in our own country; and they are generated by the very system which I am attacking. They have been long known, and often described, as constituting the remaining class of parents to which I have adverted. Dead

to the instincts of nature, and reversing the order of society ; instead of providing for their offspring, they make their offspring provide for them : not only for their necessities, but for their intemperance and profligacy. They purchase idleness by the toil of their infants ; the price of whose happiness, health, and existence, they spend in the haunts of dissipation and vice. Thus, at the very same hour of night that the father is at his guilty orgies, the child is panting in the factory. Such wretches count upon their children as upon their cattle ;—nay, to so disgusting a state of degradation does the system lead, that they make the certainty of having offspring the indispensable condition of marriage, that they may breed a generation of slaves. These, then, are some of the free agents, without the *storgè* of the beast, or the feelings of the man, to whom the advocates of the present system assure us we ought to entrust the labouring of little children ! One of these “ free agents,” a witness against Sir Robert Peel’s bill, confessed that he had pushed his own child down and broken her arm, because she did not do as he thought proper, while in the mill ! The Lords’ Committee refused to hear him another word. And shall we listen to those who urge us to commit little children to such guardianship ? We have heard, in a late memorable case,

a *dictum*, uncontradicted I believe in any quarter, stating that, by the constitution of England, the first law officer of the crown, representing the sovereign, is the guardian of all children, of whatever rank, improperly treated by their parents; but that that court is limited in its interference by the circumstance of there being property under its control. Will it be contended, then, that in these extreme cases of cruelty and oppression, (for such I shall call them), where protection is far more imperatively demanded, mere poverty should be a bar against the course of British justice? If so, let us boast no longer of the impartiality of our laws! Why, if in a solitary instance a parent were to confine his child, or a master his apprentice, in a heated room, and knowingly keep him at his labour more hours than nature could sustain, and at length the victim were to die under the tyrannous oppression, and a coroner's inquest were to return a true and just verdict upon the occasion, what would be the result? And are the multiplication of such gradual murders, and the effrontery with which they are perpetrated, to become their expiation? If not, it is high time that the legislature should interfere and rescue from the conspiracy of such fathers and such masters, instigated by kindred feelings, these innocent victims of cruelty and oppression.

“There are other descriptions of children, also, whom I should be glad to know how the objectors to whom I am alluding make out to be free agents. I mean, first, poor orphan children—a class which the system is a very efficient instrument in multiplying: very few adult spinners, as it is often alleged, and as I shall prove, surviving forty; in many instances, therefore, leaving their children fatherless at a very early period of life: indeed, so numerous are these, that a physician, examined on the occasion to which I have so often alluded, was painfully struck with the proportion. Are these orphans free agents? Again, there is in all manufacturing towns a great number of illegitimate children, and these also are very much increased by the system in question. I am aware that a celebrated authority has said, these are, “comparatively speaking, of no value to society;—others would supply their place,”—yet still I cannot but regard these as objects of the deepest compassion. To this list of free agents I might also add the little children who are still apprenticed out in considerable numbers; often, I fear, by the too ready sanction of the magistrates—whose hard, and sometimes fatal, treatment has been the subject of many recent communications which I have received from individuals of the highest credit and respectability.

But, as the objectors to legislative protection for the factory children can make it out to be unnecessary, because their parents are “free agents” for them, when they have any surviving; so also it is quite as clear, probably, in their apprehension, that the parish officer is as good a free agent for the poor orphan, the illegitimate, or the friendless little apprentice, who may be under his special protection!

“But I will proceed no further with these objections. The idea of treating children, and especially the children of the poor,—and, above all, the children of the poor imprisoned in factories,—as free agents, is too absurd to justify the attention I have already paid to it. The protection of poor children and young persons from those hardships and cruelties to which their age and condition have always rendered them peculiarly liable, has ever been held one of the first and most important duties of every Christian legislature. Our own has not been unmindful in this respect: and it is mainly owing to the change of circumstances that many of its humane provisions have been rendered inoperative, and that the present measure has become the more necessary.”

The next class of objections which he anticipates, is of a more definite and practical kind. It is that which each description of manufacture

might be expected to make ; declaring that *it* especially, above all others, required no legislative interference.

“ The very same opposition that has so long and so often triumphed over justice and humanity, is again organized, and actively at work, and will proceed as before. Every branch of manufacture proposed to be regulated claims in turn to be excepted ; a committee of inquiry is again demanded, and, I fear, in order to postpone, if not finally to defeat, the present measure. The nature of the evidence that will be brought forward is perfectly familiar to those acquainted at all with the subject. Certificates and declarations will be obtained in abundance, from divines and doctors, as to the morality and health which the present system promotes and secures. I cannot refrain from giving a sample of what may be expected in this line, and I think it will prepare us for, and arm us against, whatever may be advanced in favour of so unnatural and oppressive a system. I mean not to impeach the intentional veracity or the learning of the witnesses who appeared in its favour, and whose evidence cuts a very conspicuous figure in these ponderous Reports : it furnishes, however, another proof of the strange things that may be, perhaps conscientiously, believed and asserted when the mind or

conduct is under a particular bias. They have said that the children who were worked without any regulation, and consequently according to their employer's sole will and pleasure, were not only equally, but more healthy, and better instructed than those not so occupied; that night-labour was in no way prejudicial, but actually preferred; that the artificial heat of the rooms was really advantageous, and quite pleasant; and that nothing could equal the reluctance of the children to have it abated! That, so far from being fatigued with, for example, twelve hours' labour, the children performed even the last hour's work with greater interest and spirit than any of the rest! What a pity the term was not lengthened! in a few more hours they would have been worked into a perfect ecstasy of delight! We had been indeed informed that the women and children often cried with fatigue, but their tears were doubtless tears of rapture. A doctor is produced, who will not pronounce, without examination, to what extent this luxury of excessive labour might be carried without being prejudicial. I must quote a few of his answers to certain queries. "Should you not think (he is asked) that, generally speaking, to a child eight years old, standing twelve hours in the day would be injurious?" The doctor reverses, perhaps by mistake, the

figures, but his answer concludes,—“I believe it is not.” “Supposing (it was again demanded) I were to ask you whether you thought it injurious to a child to be kept standing three-and-twenty hours out of the four-and-twenty, should you not think it must be necessarily injurious to the health ; without any fact to rest upon, as a simple proposition put to a gentleman of the medical profession?” “Before I answer that question,” the doctor replies, “I should wish to have an examination, to see how the case stood ; and if there were such an extravagant thing to take place, and it should appear that the person was not injured by having stood three-and-twenty hours, I should then say it was not inconsistent with the health of the person so employed.” “As you doubted,” said a noble Lord, “whether a child could work for twenty-three hours, without suffering, would you extend your doubts to twenty-four hours?”—“That was put to me as an extreme case,” says the doctor : “my answer only went to this effect, that it was not in my power to assign any limits.” This same authority will not take upon himself to say whether it would be injurious to a child to be kept working during the time it gets its meals. Another medical gentleman is “totally unable to give an answer” whether “children, from six to twelve years of age, being employed from

thirteen to fifteen hours in a cotton-factory, in an erect position, and in a temperature of about eighty degrees, is consistent with safety to their constitution." Another boldly asserts that he does not see it necessary that young persons should have any recreation or amusement; nor that the constant inspiration of particles of cotton is at all injurious to the lungs. Reports of the state of particular mills are also given on medical authority, but the reporters seem to have totally forgotten that they had examined a body of persons constantly recruited; from which the severely sick, and those who had "retired to die," were necessarily absent; and not to have suspected that many of these mills were also previously and carefully prepared for such inspection. Still, I observe, it is allowed that "many of them (the children) were pale, and apparently of a delicate complexion;" but "without any decided symptoms of disease." What did that paleness and delicacy, in the rosy morning of life, indicate? Why, that disease, though not decided as to its symptoms, was fastening, with mortal grasp, upon its victims; that already early labour and confinement had, "like a worm i'th bud, fed on their damask cheek;" that the murderous system was then about its secret, but certain and deadly, work. In corroboration, however, of all that

these learned persons have advanced, and in full proof of the excellency of the entire system, bills of mortality of certain places and works were adduced, in some of which it was made to appear that, in a mean number of 888 persons employed, the annual mortality had, during eight years, averaged $3\frac{875}{1000}$ or one in 229 only! This sort of evidence suggests many ludicrous ideas; which however I shall suppress as unsuitable to the subject: it will, doubtless, be again adduced in great abundance before another select committee. Physicians, divines, and others, will be still found to testify to the same effect. But I will take the liberty of showing, before I sit down, the true value of all such certificates. The Parliament, indeed, did not much regard these champions of the factory-system on a former occasion; and, after what I shall advance, I hope the House will not trouble them again."

From considering the objections raised, Mr. Sadler passed to the reasons which existed for such a measure.

"And, first, in reference to one description of spinners, from some of whom I am now meeting with opposition of every kind,—I mean the spinners of flax,—I would seriously ask any gentleman, who has himself gone through a modern flax-mill, whether he can entertain the slightest

doubt that the occupation, as now pursued, must, in too many cases, be injurious to health and destructive of life. In many departments of these mills, the dust is great, and known to be highly injurious. In those in which fine spinning has been introduced, the air has to be heated, as in some of the cotton-mills; the flax has also, in one of the processes, to be passed through water heated to a high temperature, into which the children have constantly to plunge their arms, while the steam and the spray from the bobbins wet their clothes, especially about their middle, till the water might be wrung from them; in which condition they have, during the winter months, to pass nightly into the inclement air, and to shiver and freeze on their return home. In the heckling-rooms, in which children are now principally employed, the dust is excessive. The rooms are generally low, lighted by gas, and sometimes heated by steam; altogether exhibiting a state of human suffering the effects of which I will not trust myself to describe, but appeal to higher authority.

“I hold in my hand a treatise by a medical gentleman of great intelligence, Mr. Thackrah of Leeds, who, in his work “On the effects of arts and trades on health and longevity,” thus speaks of this pursuit—“A large proportion of men in

this department die young. We find, indeed, comparatively speaking, few old persons in any of the departments of the flax-mills.”—“ On inquiry at one of the largest establishments in this neighbourhood, we found that of 1079 persons employed, there are only nine who had attained the age of fifty ; and besides these only twenty-two who have reached forty.”

“ It may perhaps be here remarked, that this factory-census does not indicate the rate of mortality, but merely shows that few adults are required in these establishments. If so, then another enormous abuse comes into view ; namely, that this unregulated system over-labours the child, and deserts the adult ; thus reversing the natural period of toil, and leaving numbers without employment, or the knowledge how to pursue it if they could obtain any, just at the period when the active exertions of life ought to commence. Why ! this is to realize, in regard of this victim of premature labour, the fate of the poor little chimney-sweeper, whose lot, once commiserated so deeply, is now, I think, too much forgotten, and whose principal hardship is not that he is of a degraded class, but that when he has learnt his business he has outgrown it, and is turned upon society too late to learn any other occupation, and has therefore to seek an employment for which he is

unqualified. So far, then, this unrestricted factory system perpetrates the deepest injury, not only upon individuals, but upon society at large.

“But to return to Mr. Thackrah. He says, that a visitor cannot remain many minutes in certain rooms without being sensibly affected in his respiration. Also, that “a suffocating sensation is often produced by the tubes which convey steam for heating the rooms.” He examined, by the stethoscope, several individuals so employed, and found, in all of them, “the lungs or air-tube considerably diseased.” He adds, that the coughs of the persons waiting to be examined, were so troublesome as continually to interrupt and confuse the exploration by that instrument. He says, “that though the wages for this labour are by no means great, still the time of labour in the flax-mills is excessive. The people are now (November 1830) working from half-past six in the morning till eight at night, and are allowed only an interval of forty minutes in all that time. Thus human beings are kept in an atmosphere of flax-dust nearly thirteen hours in the day, and this, not one, but six days in the week.” “No man of humanity,” he observes, “can reflect, without distress, on the state of thousands of children,—roused from their beds at an early hour, hurried to the mills, and kept there, with an

interval of only forty minutes, till a late hour at night—kept, moreover, in an atmosphere loaded with noxious dust.” “Health,” he exclaims, “cleanliness, mental improvement—how are they regarded? Recreation is out of the question. There is scarcely time for meals. The very period of sleep, so necessary to the young, is too often abridged. Nay, children are sometimes worked even in the night! Human beings thus decay before they arrive at the term of maturity.” He observes elsewhere, “that this system has grown up by a series of encroachments upon the poor children; that the benevolent masters are not able to rectify these abuses. A legislative enactment is the alone remedy for this as well as the other great opprobrium of our manufactures—the improper employment of children.” Such are the opinions of this medical gentleman upon this subject, written long before the present bill was before the House; and founded upon daily observation and experience.

“I might add the opinion of another very excellent practitioner of the same place, Mr. Smith, respecting the cruelty of the present system, and the misery and decrepitude which it inflicts upon its victims; but his opinions, given with great force and ability, have, I think, been already widely disseminated by means of the press. The

other surgeons of the Leeds Infirmary—all men of great professional eminence—entertain, I believe, precisely similar opinions. One of them, Mr. Hey, a name that at once commands the highest respect in every medical society of this country, or indeed of Europe, presided as mayor of Leeds, at an immensely numerous meeting of the inhabitants of that borough, when a petition from that place, in favour of the bill, was unanimously agreed to; and afterwards received the signatures of between 18,000 and 20,000 persons.

“In silk and worsted mills, and especially in the former, the nature of the employment may be less prejudicial in itself; but then its duration is often more protracted, and it falls in a larger proportion upon females and young children. In many spun-silk mills, in which a different operation from that of silk-throwing—and one conducted upon Arkwright’s principle—is carried on, the practice of working children at a very tender age, and often all night, prevails. In some of these, I am informed, they commence at one o’clock on the Monday morning, and leave off at eleven on Saturday night; thus delicately avoiding the Sabbath, indeed, but rendering its profitable observance, either for improvement, instruction, or worship, an utter impossibility.

“In the worsted mills, the greatest irregulari-

ties, as to the hours of working, have existed, and therefore occasional oppression, in these departments, has long prevailed. Let the following extract suffice, from a document drawn up by a gentleman in this branch of business, Mr. Wood,—to mention whose name is to kindle at once the most enthusiastic feelings in the bosoms of the honest operatives of the north, and to whom is due the honour of originating and supporting this attempt to regulate the labour of children; and who, while he has conducted his own manufacture with the greatest humanity and kindness, has still earnestly sought to ameliorate the general condition of the labouring poor. This gentleman gives the ages of 475 persons, principally females, employed at a worsted-mill, which, it appears, average about the age of thirteen; and adds—

“Children of these years are obliged to be at the factories, winter and summer, by six in the morning, and to remain there till seven in the evening, with but one brief interval of thirty minutes, every day except Saturday, ceasing work on that day, in some factories, at half-past five, in others at six or seven P.M. Not unfrequently this labour is extended till eight or nine at night—fifteen hours—having but the same interval for meals, rest, or recreation: nay, such is the steady

growth of this overworking system, that children have been confined in the factory from six in the morning till eight at night—fourteen hours continuously, without any time being allowed for meals, rest, or recreation ;—the meals to be taken while attending the machines ; and this the practice of years.

“ This picture, sufficiently appalling, has also to be darkened by the addition of frequent night-labour. Such is the practice at Bradford and the neighbourhood. But to show that these evils are not confined to any particular neighbourhood, and that they prevail wherever unprotected children are the principal labourers of the community, I shall next advert to their treatment in the flannel manufactories in the Principality of Wales. I quote the following account, which I have received from the most respectable quarter :—

“ With certain fluctuations in the degree of labour, resulting from the difference in the demand of manufactured goods, the children here work twenty-four hours every other day, out of which they are allowed three hours only for meals, &c. When trade is particularly brisk, the elder children work from six in the morning till seven in the evening, two hours being allowed for meals, &c., and every other night they work all night, which is still a more severe case : for this addi-

tional night-labour they receive five-pence. There is another lamentable circumstance attending the employment of these poor children, which is that they are left the whole of the night alone ; the sexes indiscriminately mixed together ; consequently you may imagine that the depravity of our work-people is indeed very great. The adults are employed in feeding the engines. Independant of moral considerations, the accidents that occur to these poor little creatures are really dreadful ; the numbers of persons to be seen with mutilated and amputated limbs are quite distressing, and this will ever be the case till some better regulation is carried into effect.—There is not a single place of charitable education, for a population of about 8000 souls, beyond a Sunday-school.

“ As to woollen mills, they are not, generally speaking, injurious to health ; though such is the case in certain departments of them, especially since the introduction of the rotatory machines. Here I might argue that the lightness of the labour, which is the reason usually urged against an interference with excessive hours, no longer applies, as in woollen mills the labour is, in general, much more strenuous than that in most of the before-mentioned factories. But I disdain to avail myself of an argument, however plausible, which I believe to be fallacious, and I will here

observe, once for all, that it is not so much the degree of labour which is injurious to these work-children (how revolting the compound sounds!—it is not yet admitted, I think, into our language; I trust it will never be familiarized to our feelings);—I say, it is not so much the degree, as the duration of their labour, that is so cruel and destructive to these poor work-children. It is the wearisome uniformity of the employment,—the constrained positions in which it is pursued—and, above all, the constant and close confinement, which are more fatiguing to the body as well as mind, than more varied and voluntary, though far stronger, exertion. I dwell upon this point, because it is the sole possible plea for the long and imprisoning hours of the present laborious system: though when properly considered, it is one of the most powerful arguments against it. Light labour! Is the labour of holding this pen and of writing with it strenuous? And yet, ask a clerk in any of the public offices, or in any private counting-house, when he has been at his employment some half-dozen hours in the day less than one of these children, whether he does not think that he has had enough of this light labour—to say nothing of the holidays, of which he has many, and the child none. Ask the recruit recent from the plough, whether an hour of his

light exertion is not more fatiguing than any three he ever endured in the fields. Ask his experienced officer how long he can subject even the veteran to this sort of slight but constrained exertion, though in the open air, with impunity. I might appeal to the chair, whether the lingering hours which have to be endured here, though unaccompanied with any bodily exertion whatever, are not "weariness to the flesh." But what would be the feelings of the youngest and most active individual amongst us, if, for example, he were compelled to pass that time, engaged in some constant and anxious employment, stunned with the noise of revolving wheels, suffocated with the heat and stench of a low, crowded, and gas-lighted apartment, bathed in sweat, and stimulated by the scourge of an inexorable taskmaster? I say, what would be his ideas of the light labour of twelve or fourteen hours in such a pursuit; and when, once or twice in every week, the night also was added to such a day? And how would he feel, if long years of such light labour lay before him? If he be a parent, let him imagine the child of his bosom in that situation, and then judge of the children of thousands who are as dear to the Universal Parent as are his own to him! Let him think of his own childhood, and he will then remember that this light labour

is the fatigue of youth, and that strenuous exertion, when the buoyant spirit exercises the entire frame, is its sport. I might quote authorities on this subject; but it is unnecessary. Common sense and common feeling at once decide the point, and confute this disgusting plea of tyranny for the captivity of youth. Hence the late Sir Robert Peel in bringing forward his last measure, emphatically observed, that “it was not so much the hardship, as the duration, of labour, which had caused the mischievous effects on the rising generation.” But if, after all, honourable members choose to argue the question on different grounds, and wish to establish a variation in the duration of the labour of children in mills and factories, in reference to the nature of the employment,—be it so. Confident in my own mind that the bill proposes the utmost limit which the youthful constitution can safely bear, in any pursuit, or under any circumstances, I can have no objection to that period being abridged in the more pernicious and strenuous employments of the country.

“I shall not attempt at present to give any precise account of the length of labour generally borne in different mills and factories; it varies according to the humanity of the employer, and the demand for his goods at particular seasons. But let me here remark, that these variations con-

stitute one of the main reasons for a legislative protection ; otherwise the humane masters will be driven out of the trade : for these, it is quite clear, cannot control others less feelingly disposed. They are indeed, in the present state of things, as little free agents as the children whom they employ ; and, moreover, the want of a due regulation throws the effects of those fluctuations to which trade and manufactures are subject, in an undue and distressing degree upon those who are the least able to sustain their effects. Thus, if the demand and profit of the employer increase, the labour of the operatives, most of whom are children, augments, till many of them are literally worked to death : if that demand diminish, the children are thrown partially or wholly out of work, and left to beggary and the parish. So that their labour, averaged throughout the year, as some mill-owners I perceive have calculated its duration, does not appear so excessive. For, at the very moment that a strenuous opposition is being made against the curtailment of infantile labour, the masters themselves, in certain flax-mills in the North, have curtailed it to some purpose—having, if I am not misinformed, diminished the employment in some mills, and shut up others entirely. And I have no doubt but that, at this particular moment, abundance of evidence

might be adduced before a select committee to show that the hours mentioned in the bill are observed, and indeed a much stricter limitation enforced. But then if it be right that the owners should be allowed to throw out of employment all these children at a few days' notice, is it proper that they should be permitted to work them for an unlimited number of hours, the moment it suits their purpose? If the effect of this bill were, in some measure to equalize the labour of these poor children, and thereby prevent those fluctuations which are so distressing to them in both its extremes, it would so far accomplish a most beneficial object. It might, I think, transfer a little of the fluctuation from the factory to the stock-room, with great advantage to the operatives, and consequently to the public at large.

“It is impossible to furnish any uniform account of the hours of labour endured by children in these factories, and I am unwilling to represent extreme cases as general ones, although it is the bounden duty of Parliament to provide against such, as it does, for example, with respect to atrocious crimes, which are extreme cases in civilized society. I shall therefore only give one or two instances of the extent of oppression to which the system is occasionally carried. The following were the hours of labour imposed upon the

children employed in a factory at Leeds last summer :—On Monday morning, work commenced at six o'clock ; at nine, half an hour for breakfast ; from half-past nine till twelve, work. Dinner, one hour ; from one till half-past four, work. Afternoon meal, half an hour ; from five till eight, work : rest for half an hour. From half-past eight till twelve (midnight), work : an hour's rest. From one in the morning till five, work : half an hour's rest. From half-past five till nine, work : breakfast. From half-past nine till twelve, work : dinner ; from one till half-past four, work. Rest half an hour ; and work again from five till nine o'clock on Tuesday evening, when the labour terminated, and the gang of adult and infant slaves was dismissed for the night, after having toiled thirty-nine hours, with brief intervals (amounting to only six hours in the whole) for refreshment, but none for sleep. On Wednesday and Thursday, day-work only. From Friday morning till Saturday night, the same prolonged labour repeated, with intermissions, as on Monday, Monday night, and Tuesday ; except that the labour of the last day closed at five. The ensuing day, Sunday, must, under such circumstances, be a day of stupor ; to rouse the children from which would only be to continue their physical sufferings, without the possibility of compen-

sating them with any moral good. Clergymen, Sunday School-masters, and other benevolent persons, are beginning to feel this to be the case ; physicians, I find, have long observed it ; and parents, wishful as they are that their offspring should have some little instruction, are yet more anxious that they should have rest. Sunday schools have long been rendered appendages to the manufacturing system, which has necessarily emptied the day-schools of the poor wherever that system prevails : but, not content with monopolizing the whole week with protracted labour, the Sabbath itself is thus rendered a day of languor and exhaustion, in which it is impossible that due instruction can be received, or the solemn duties which religion enjoins duly performed ; in fact, it is a mere fallow for the worn-out frame, in order that it may be able to produce another series of exhausting crops of human labour. If some limits therefore are not prescribed to these constant and cruel encroachments, our labouring population will become, ere long, imbruted with ignorance, as well as enslaved by excessive toil."

"I will however present, in as few words as possible, the effects, as described by medical men, of these long hours of confinement, without sufficient intervals for meals, recreation, and rest, and continued often through the night, in rooms artifi-

cially heated, and lit by gas; the atmosphere being otherwise so polluted and offensive as to render respiration painful, even for a few minutes. They describe the consequences to be, in many cases langour and debility, sickness, loss of appetite, pulmonary complaints, such as difficulty of breathing, coughs, asthmas, and consumptions; struma, the endemia of the factory, and other chronic diseases;—while, if these more distressing effects are not produced, the muscular power is enfeebled, the growth impeded, and life greatly abridged. Deformity is also a common and distressing result of this overstrained and too early labour. The bones, in which the animal, in contra-distinction to the earthy, matter is known to prevail in early life, are then pliable, and often cannot sustain the super-incumbent weight of the body for so many hours without injury. Hence, those of the leg become bent; the arch of the foot, which is composed of several bones of a wedge-like form, is pressed down, and its elasticity destroyed, from which arises that disease in the foot only lately described, but common in factory districts. The spine is often greatly affected, and its processes irregularly protruded, by which great deformity is occasioned. The ligaments also fail by overpressure and tension. Hence the hinge-joints, of which they are the main support,

such as those of the knee and the ankle, are overstrained, producing the deformity called knock-knees and lame ancles, so exceedingly common in mills. Thus are numbers of children distorted and crippled in early life, and frequently rendered incapable of any active exertion during the rest of their days. To this catalogue of sufferings must be added, mutilation of limbs or loss of life, by frequent accidents. The overworking of these children, occasions a weariness and lethargy which it is impossible always to resist : hence, drowsy and exhausted, the poor creatures fall too often among the machinery, which is not in many instances sufficiently sheathed ; when their muscles are lacerated, their bones broken, or their limbs torn off, in which cases they are constantly sent to the infirmaries to be cured, and if crippled for life, they are turned out and maintained at the public cost ; or they are sometimes killed upon the spot. I have myself known, in more instances than one, the arm torn off,—in one horrible case both ; and a poor girl now exists upon a charitable subscription who met with that dreadful accident at one of the flax-mills in my neighbourhood. In another factory, and that recently, the mangled limbs of a boy were sent home to his mother, unprepared for the appalling spectacle : I will not describe the result. It is true

that a great majority of these accidents are of a less serious nature, but the admission-books of the infirmaries in any manufacturing district will show the number ; and their accounts of the expense of buying irons to support the bending legs of the young children who become crippled by long standing in the mills, will also prove the tendency of over-confinement and early labour to produce deformity. Dr. Ashton and Surgeon Graham, who examined six mills in Stockport, in which 824 persons were employed, principally children, have reported the result individually, and the lists seems rather that of a hospital than a workshop. The particulars are deeply affecting, but I must only give the totals. Of 824 persons, 183 only were pronounced healthy ; 240 were stated to be delicate ; 258 unhealthy ; 43 very much stunted ; 100 with enlarged ancles and knees ; and among the whole there were 37 cases of distortion. The accidents by machinery are not, I think, noticed ; but I find that Dr. Winstanley, one of the physicians of the Manchester Infirmary, on examining 106 children in a Sunday-school, discovered that no less than 47 of them had suffered accidents from this one cause. I have this morning received, from one of the most eminent surgeons of this metropolis, a letter, in which he informs me, that on making a tour through the manufacturing

districts some years ago, he was painfully struck with the numerous cases of mutilation which he observed, and which he attributed to this long and wearying system of labour in mills and factories. Of the mortality which this system occasions, I shall speak hereafter.

“ Can anything, then, darken the picture which I have hastily drawn, or, rather, which others, infinitely more competent to the task, have strikingly portrayed? Yes, Sir, and that remains to be added which renders it the most disgusting as well as distressing system which ever put human feelings to the utmost test of endurance. It has the universally-recognised brand and test of barbarism as well as cruelty upon it. It is the feebler sex principally on which this enormous wrong is perpetrated! Female children must be laboured to the utmost extent of their physical powers, and indeed frequently far beyond them. Need I state the peculiar hardships, the disgusting cruelty, which this involves? I speak not, poor things, of the loss of their beauty,—of the greater physical sufferings to which their sex exposes them. But, again taking with me the highest medical authorities, I refer to the consequences of early and immoderate labour; especially at the period when the system rapidly attains its full development, and is peculiarly susceptible of permanent injury.

Still more are the effects felt when they become mothers, for which, I fear, their previous pursuits have little qualified them. It is in evidence, that long standing has a known tendency—how shall I express it?—*contrahere et minuere pelvem*,—and thereby to increase greatly the danger and difficulty of parturition, rendering embryotomy—one of the most distressing operations which a surgeon ever has to perform—occasionally necessary. I have communications upon this subject from persons of great professional experience; but still I prefer to appeal to evidence before the public; and one reference shall suffice. Dr. Jones, who had practised in the neighbourhood of certain mills, in favour of which much evidence was adduced, which indeed it is rarely difficult to procure, states, that in the “eight or ten years during which he was an accoucheur, he met with more cases requiring the aid of instruments (that circumstance showing them to be bad ones,) than a gentleman of great practice in Birmingham, to whom he was previously a pupil, had met with in the whole course of his life.” Abundance of evidence to the same effect is before me. But I forbear. I confess, therefore, that I feel my indignation roused when I see papers put forth in which it is stated as a recommendation, forsooth, of the present system, and as a reason why it should by

no means be regulated, that in certain mills girls are principally employed ! This a matter of exultation ! I would address those who so regard it in the language of the poet, “ Art thou of woman born, and feel’st no shame !”

“ Nor are the mental, any more than the physical, sufferings of these poor young creatures to be overlooked. In the very morning of life, when their little hearts yearn within them for some relaxation and amusement, to be thus taken captive, and debarred the sports of youth, is almost as great, nay, a greater cruelty than to inflict upon them thus early the toil of advanced life. Their fate, alas ! reverses the patriarch’s pathetic exclamation, and their *infant* days are “ labour and sorrow.” I perceive that I excite the risibility of an honourable gentleman opposite. What there is to smile at in these just representations of infantile sufferings, I am really at a loss to imagine. I will venture however to give him and the House a few more of these amusing facts before I have done with the subject.

“ It may be thought almost impossible that children should be assembled so early, and dismissed so late, and still kept through the whole period in a state of active exertion. I will attempt to explain this. First, then, their early and punctual attendance is enforced by fines, as are many

other regulations of a very severe character; so that a child may lose a considerable part of its wages by being a few minutes too late in the morning: that they should not leave too soon is very sufficiently provided against. Now, this extreme punctuality is no slight aggravation of the sufferings of the child. It is not in one case out of ten perhaps that the parent has a clock; and as nature is not very wakeful in a short night's rest, after a long day's labour, the child, to ensure punctuality, must be often roused much too early. Whoever has lived in a manufacturing town, must have heard, if he happened to be awake many hours before light on a winter's morning, the pattering of little pattens on the pavement, continuing perhaps for half an hour together, though the time appointed for assembling was the same. Even then the child is not always safe, however punctual; for, in some mills, two descriptions of clocks are kept, and it is easy to guess how they are occasionally managed. So much for the system of fines, by which, I am told, some mill-owners have boasted that they have made large sums annually.

“Then, in order to keep the children awake, and to stimulate their exertions, means are made use of, to which I shall now advert, as a last instance of the degradation to which this system

has reduced the manufacturing operatives of this country. Sir, children are beaten with thongs prepared for the purpose. Yes, the females of this country, no matter whether children or grown up,—I hardly know which is the more disgusting outrage,—are beaten upon the face, arms, and bosom,—beaten in your ‘free market of labour,’ as you term it, like slaves! These are the instruments.—[*Here the honourable member exhibited some black, heavy, leathern thongs,—one of them fixed in a sort of handle, the smack of which, when struck upon the table, resounded through the House.*]—They are quite equal to breaking an arm, but that the bones of the young are, as I have before said, pliant. The marks, however, of the thong are long visible; and the poor wretch is flogged before its companions; flogged, I say, like a dog, by the tyrant overlooker. We speak with execration of the cart-whip of the West Indies—but let us see this night an equal feeling rise against the factory-thong of England. Is it necessary that we should inquire, by means of a select committee, whether this practice is to be put down; and whether females in England shall be still flogged to their labour? Sir, I should wish to propose an additional clause in this Bill, enacting, that the overseer who dares to lay the lash on the almost naked body of the child, shall

be sentenced to the tread-wheel for a month ; and it would be but right if the master who knowingly tolerates the infliction of this cruelty on abused infancy, this insult upon parental feeling, this disgrace upon the national character, should bear him company, though he roll to the house of correction in his chariot !”

Mr. Sadler then adverted to various collateral proofs of the necessity of the proposed measure ;—such as the state of morals, and the scale of mortality in the manufacturing districts ; and the protection which the legislature had seen fit to afford, in the case of the negro slaves in our colonies. He then closed as follows,

“ I must now apologize to this House for having so long occupied its time and attention. I owe, however, a deeper apology to those whose cause I have attempted to advocate, for having, after all, left untouched many important claims which they have earnestly pressed upon my notice. But if honourable members will consult their own bosoms, they will find them there. We are about to deal with the strongest instincts and the holiest feelings of the human heart. The happiness and tranquillity of the present generation, and the hopes of futurity, depend, in no slight degree, on our resolves. The industrious classes are looking with intense interest to the proceedings of this

night, and are demanding protection for themselves and their children. Thousands of maternal bosoms are beating with the deepest anxiety for the future fate of their long-oppressed and degraded offspring. Nay, the children themselves are made aware of the importance of your present decision, and look towards this House for succour. I wish I could bring a group of these little ones to that bar,—I am sure their silent appearance would plead more forcibly in their behalf than the loudest eloquence. Sir, I still hope that their righteous cause will prevail. But I have seen enough to mingle apprehension with my hopes. I perceive the rich and the powerful once more leaguings against them, and wielding that wealth which these children, or such as they, have created, against their cause. I have long seen the mighty efforts that are made to keep them in bondage, and have been deeply affected at their continued success; so that I can hardly refrain from exclaiming with one of old, “I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and beheld the tears of such as were oppressed; and on the side of the oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter!”

“I trust, however, that this House, whose peculiar duty it is to defend the weak and redress the injured, will interpose and extend that pro-

tection to these defenceless children, which is equally demanded by the principles of justice, mercy, and policy. Many have been the struggles made in their behalf, but hitherto they have been defeated ; the laws passed for their protection have been avowedly and shamefully evaded, and have therefore had little practical effect but to legalize cruelty and suffering. Hence at this late hour, while I am thus feebly, but earnestly, pleading the cause of these oppressed children, what numbers of them are still tethered to their toil, confined in heated rooms, bathed in perspiration, stunned with the roar of revolving wheels, poisoned with the noxious effluvia of grease and gas, till, at last, weary and exhausted, they turn out, almost naked, into the inclement air, and creep, shivering, to beds from which a relay of their young work-fellows have just risen. Such, at the best, is the fate of many of them, while, in numerous instances, they are diseased, stunted, crippled, depraved, and destroyed, Sir, let that pestilence, which no longer walketh in darkness among us, but destroyeth at noon-day, once seize upon our manufacturing population, and dreadful will be the consequences. A national fast has been appointed on this solemn occasion ; and it is well :—let it be one which the Deity himself has prescribed,—let us “undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free.”

“ Sir, I have shown the suffering,—the crime, —the mortality, attendant upon this system;—consequences which, I trust, Parliament will at length arrest. Earnestly do I wish that I could have prevailed upon this House and his Majesty’s government to adopt the proposed measure, without the delay which will attend a further, and, as I shall ever maintain, an unnecessary inquiry. Would that we might have come to a resolution as to the hours during which innocent and helpless children are henceforth to be worked in these pursuits, so as to render the preservation of their health and life probable, and the due improvement of their minds and morals possible! Would that we had at once decided, as we could wish others to decide regarding our own children, under like circumstances, or as we shall wish that we had done, when the Universal Parent shall call us to a strict account for our conduct to one of the least of these little ones! As the case, however, is otherwise,—as we are, it seems, still to inquire and delay, I will now move the second reading of the bill; and afterwards propose such a Committee as, I hope, will assist in carrying into effect the principle of a measure so important to the prosperity, character, and happiness of the British people.”

The opposition of the interested parties, it

will be seen, and their influence with the government, compelled Mr. Sadler to consent to the delay involved in a Parliamentary Inquiry. Nor was this delay the only evil connected with that concession. In its operation, this inquiry was unquestionably the means of shortening Mr. Sadler's own life. It necessarily devolved upon him to conduct the whole proceeding. During forty-three days, extending from the 12th of April to the 7th of August, he occupied the chair of that Committee. But this, though a serious task, was but a small portion of the whole labour. The inquiry was peculiarly *his own*. Hence it became his duty to seek for information from every part of the kingdom; to correspond extensively with parties qualified to give information; and to carry the whole body of evidence accurately through the press: and all this in the face of a determined, because an interested opposition. The toil of these combined operations was very great, making both food and sleep often unattainable comforts. The effects of that summer's work were visible to the very close of his life. It is certain that the exertion shortened his days: but it is gratifying to reflect, that the sacrifice was not made in vain.

The result of the whole was the laying on the table of the House, on the 8th of August, a mass of evidence, establishing a case of the most

unquestionable guilt against the Mill-owners, and making it clearly inevitable, that some remedy should at once be sought out.

The weight of the accusation, with its accompanying body of proofs, was so felt by the parties concerned, that, in desperation at the absence of all other pleas, they set up a cry of "partial" and "unfair," against the Report of this Committee. This excuse, however, could avail them nothing, with those who took the trouble to enquire into the facts of the case. That Committee was amply supplied, by the watchful care of "the Factory interest," with zealous and able advocates of their views. It consisted of Mr. Sadler, Lord Viscount Morpeth, Mr. Strickland, Mr. Heywood, Mr. Wilbraham, Mr. Vernon, Mr. Benett, Sir Henry Bunbury, Mr. Poulett Thomson, Mr. Dixon, Sir John Hobhouse, Mr. Horatio Ross, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Meynell, Mr. Perceval, Mr. Boldero, Lord Nugent, Mr. Sheil, Sir George Rose, Mr. Attwood, Mr. Ridley Colborne, Mr. Kenyon, Mr. Fowell Buxton, Mr. Estcourt, Mr. John Smith, Mr. Weyland, Viscount Lowther, Mr. Hope, Mr. Moreton, and Mr. Lennard; eight of whom, at least, were the earnest guardians of the interests of the Mill-owners. Most sedulous was their attention to the whole proceeding: That

any false or wilfully exaggerated statement could have passed them undetected, is clearly incredible. Nevertheless, this was the plea afterwards resorted to, and, on the next step being taken in Parliament, the manufacturers demanded a new enquiry, not before a Parliamentary Committee, but by Commissioners sent from London to collect evidence in the factory-districts.

This occurred at the opening of the session of 1833; that of 1832 having been wasted in the enquiry conducted by Mr. Sadler. This first enquiry was earnestly deprecated by him, as utterly uncalled-for. It answered, however, the purposes of the Mill-owners, in postponing all legislation for one whole year. No sooner, however, had its Report been made, than the factory interest impugned that very investigation which they themselves had demanded. They now called for a fresh and further enquiry; an enquiry to be made on the spot, by Commissioners despatched from London for that purpose.

Once more the government, which, at their request, had forced the Committee of 1832 on Mr. Sadler,—gave way to this powerful body; and a further investigation was determined on. On the 19th of April, 1833, a Royal Commission was issued, to fifteen persons therein named, enjoining them

“to proceed with the utmost dispatch to collect information in the manufacturing districts, as to the employment of children in factories, and as to the propriety and means of curtailing the hours of their labour.”

From Mr. Sadler’s Committee, therefore, an appeal was granted; and that appeal was to a body more favourably constituted, it was conceived, towards the mill-owners, than the Parliamentary Committee of 1832. Of the great influence of the manufacturers with the Government, no doubt could be entertained; or that that influence would be used to prevent the appointment of any persons on the Commission, whose disposition might be annoyingly inquisitive. In fact it was seen in the working of this scheme, that several of the Commissioners felt no repugnance at accepting the hospitalities of the wealthier Mill-owners, —of the *very parties*, in fact, touching whose alleged misconduct their enquiry ought to have been made!

Yet, notwithstanding all these favourable circumstances on the part of the manufacturers, what was the main result of this second enquiry? So important is it to understand this,—that we must give at some length, the principal passages in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry, which was laid on the table of the House of Commons, on the 28th of June, 1833.

The Commissioners, whose general bias, be it remembered, *cannot* have been against the Mill-owners, thus sum up the facts collected in the course of their enquiries.

“Having thus considered the general treatment of children in factories, and the collateral circumstances under which their employment is carried on, and which influence in no inconsiderable degree the effects of that employment, we come now to consider what those effects really are, as far as they are ascertained by the evidence collected under the present investigation.

“The effects of factory-labour on children are immediate and remote : the immediate effects are fatigue, sleepiness, and pain ; the remote effects, such at least as are usually conceived to result from it, are, deterioration of the physical constitution, deformity, disease, and deficient mental instruction and moral culture.

1. “The degree of fatigue produced on children by ordinary factory-labour may be gathered from their own account of their feelings, and from the statements of parents, adult operatives, overlookers, and proprietors.

“The statements of the children, and more especially of the younger children, as to their own feeling of fatigue, may be said to be uniform. The intensity of the feeling is influenced, without

doubt, by the age of the child, and the constitutional robustness or feebleness of the individual; but the feeling itself is always the same, and differs only in degree. The expressions of fatigue are the strongest and the most constant on the part of the young children employed in the factories in Scotland, because there the ordinary hours of work are in general longer by an hour or an hour and a quarter than in the factories of England. We have been struck with the perfect uniformity of the answers returned to the Commissioners by the young workers in this country, in the largest and best-regulated factories as well as in the smaller and less advantageously conducted. In fact, whether the factory be in the pure air of the country, or in the large town; under the best or the worst management; and whatever be the nature of the work, whether light or laborious; or the kind of treatment, whether considerate and gentle, or strict and harsh; the account of the child, when questioned as to its feeling of fatigue, is the same. The answer always being "sick-tired, especially in the winter nights." "So tired when she leaves the mill that she can do nothing." "Feels so tired, she throws herself down when she gangs hame, no caring what she does." "Often much tired, and feels sore, standing so long on her legs." "Often so tired, she

could not eat her supper." "Night and morning very tired; has two sisters in the mill; has heard them complain to her mother, and she says they must work." "When the tow is coarse, we are so tired we are not able to set one foot by the other." "Whiles I do not know what to do with myself; as tired every morning as I can be."

"Young persons of more advanced age, speaking of their own feelings when younger, give to the Commissioners such representations as the following:—"Many a time has been so fatigued that she could hardly take off her clothes at night, or put them on in the morning; her mother would be raging at her, because when she sat down she could not get up again through the house." "Looks on the long hours as a great bondage." "Thinks they are no much better than the Israelites in Egypt, and their life is no pleasure to them." "When a child, was so tired that she could seldom eat her supper, and never awoke of herself." "Are the hours to be shortened?" earnestly demanded one of these girls of the Commissioners who was examining her, "for they are too long."

"The truth of the account given by the children of the fatigue they experience by the ordinary labour of the factory is confirmed by the testimony of their parents. In general the representation made by parents is like the following:—"Her

children come home so tired and worn out they can hardly eat their supper." "Has often seen his daughter come home in the evening so fatigued that she would go to bed supperless." "Has seen the young workers absolutely oppressed, and unable to sit down or rise up; this has happened to his own children."

"These statements are confirmed by the evidence of the adult operatives. The depositions of the witnesses of this class are to the effect that "the younger workers are greatly fatigued;" that "children are often very swere (unwilling) in the mornings;" that "children are quite tired out;" that "the long hours exhaust the workers, especially the young ones, to such a degree that they can hardly walk home;" that "young workers are absolutely oppressed, and so tired as to be unable to sit down or rise up;" that "younger workers are so tired they often cannot raise their hands to their head;" that "all the children are very keen for shorter hours, thinking them now such bondage that they might as well be in a prison;" that "the children, when engaged in their regular work, are often exhausted beyond what can be expressed;" that "the sufferings of the children absolutely require that the hours should be shortened."

"The depositions of the overlookers are to the

same effect;" namely, that though the children may not complain, yet that they seem tired and sleepy, and happy to get out of doors to play themselves. That "the work overtires workers in general." "Often sees the children very tired and very stiff-like." "Is entirely of opinion, after real experience, that the hours of labour are far too long for the children, for their health and education; has from twenty-two to twenty-four boys under his charge, from nine to about fourteen years old; and they are generally much tired at night, always anxious, asking if it be near the mill-stopping." "Never knew a single worker among the children that did not complain of the long hours, which prevent them from getting education and from getting health in the open air."

"The managers in like manner state that "the labour exhausts the children;" that "workers are tired in the evening;" that "children inquire anxiously for the hour of stopping;" and admissions to the same effect on the part of managers and proprietors will be found in every part of the Scotch depositions.

"In the north-eastern district the evidence is equally complete that the fatigue of the young workers is great. "I have known the children," says one witness, "hide themselves in the stove among the wool, so that they should not go home

when the work was over, when we have worked till ten or eleven. I have seen six or eight fetched out of the stove and beat home; beat out of the mill however. I do not know why they should hide themselves, unless it was that they were too tired to go home."

"Many a one I have had to rouse in the last hour when the work is very slack from fatigue." "The children were very much jaded, especially when we worked late at night." "The children bore the long hours very ill indeed." "Exhausted in body and depressed in mind by the length of the hours and the height of the temperature." "I found when I was an overlooker, that after the children from eight to twelve years had worked eight or nine or ten hours, they were nearly ready to faint; some were asleep; some were only kept to work by being spoken to, or by a little chastisement, to make them jump up. I was sometimes obliged to chastise them when they were almost fainting, and it hurt my feelings; then they would spring up and work pretty well for another hour; but the last two or three hours were my hardest work, for they then got so exhausted." "I have never seen fathers carrying their children backwards nor forwards to the factories, but I have seen children apparently under nine, and from nine to twelve years of age, going

to the factories at five in the morning, almost asleep in the streets."

"Some children do appear fatigued and some do not." "I have noticed the drawers exhausted beyond what I could express." "Many times the drawers are worked beyond their strength." There is however a striking contrast in the statements of all the witnesses relative to the fatigue of the children in the factories of the western district, in which the hours of labour for children are so much shorter than in the other factories of the kingdom.

2. "Children complain as much of sleepiness as of fatigue. "Often feels so sleepy that he cannot keep his eyes open." "Longs for the mill's stopping, is so sleepy." "Often falls asleep while sitting, sometimes while standing." "Her little sister falls asleep, and they awake her by a cry." "Has two younger sisters in the mill; they fall asleep directly they get home." "Was up before four this morning, which made her fall asleep when the mill was inspected at one to-day by the Factory Commissioners; often so tired at night that she falls asleep before leaving the mill."

"I always found it more difficult to keep my piecers awake the last hours of a winter's evening. I have told the master, and I have been told by him that I did not half hide them. This was

when they worked from six to eight." "I have seen them fall asleep, and they have been performing their work with their hands while they were asleep, after the billey had stopped, when their work was over. I have stopped and looked at them for two minutes, going through the motions of piecening fast asleep, when there was really no work to do, and they were really doing nothing. I believe, when we have been working long hours, that they have never been washed, but on a Saturday night, for weeks together." "Children at night are so fatigued that they are asleep often as soon as they sit down, so that it is impossible to waken them to sense enough to wash themselves, or scarcely to eat a bit of supper, being so stupid in sleep. I experience it by my own child, and I did by myself when a child, for once I fell asleep, even on my knees to pray on my bed-side, and slept a length of time till the family came to bed." Overlookers and managers in innumerable instances depose to the same effect.

3. "Pains in the limbs, back, loins, and side are frequent, but not as frequent as fatigue and drowsiness. The frequency and severity of the pain uniformly bears a strict relation to the tender age of the child and the severity of the labour. Pain is seldom complained of when the labour

did not commence until the age of nine, and was not immoderate. Girls suffer from pain more commonly than boys, and up to a more advanced age ; though occasionally men, and not unfrequently young women, and women beyond the meridian of life, complain of pain, yet there is evidence that the youngest children are so distressed by pain of their feet, in consequence of the long standing, that they sometimes throw off their shoes, and so take cold. "Feet feel so sair that they make him greet." "Was quite well when she went to the mill, but the confinement brought on a complaint in her head, and her left side is now pained." "Many nights I do not get a wink of sleep for the pain." "At first suffered so much from the pain that he could hardly sleep, but it went off." "Knee failed from excessive labour ; severe pains and aches would come on, particularly in the morning ; it was better in the evening ; felt no pains in any other parts. There were two or three complaining at the same time of their knees aching." "I have seen children under eighteen years of age before six at night, their legs has hurt them to that degree that they have many a time been crying."

4. "Swelling of the feet is a still more frequent source of suffering. "Obliged to bathe her feet to subdue the swelling." "The long standing

gives her swelled feet and ancles, and fatigues her so much that sometimes she does nae ken how to get to her bed." "Night and morning her legs swell, and are often very painful." That this affection is common is confirmed by the concurrent statements of parents, operatives, overlookers, and managers.

5. "That this excessive fatigue, privation of sleep, pain in various parts of the body, and swelling of the feet experienced by the young workers, coupled with the constant standing, the peculiar attitudes of the body, and the peculiar motions of the limbs required in the labour of the factory, together with the elevated temperature, and the impure atmosphere in which that labour is often carried on, do sometimes ultimately terminate in the production of serious, permanent, and incurable disease, appears to us to be established. From cases detailed in the evidence, and the accuracy of which has been strictly investigated, we do not conceive it to be possible to arrive at any other conclusion. The evidence, especially from Dundee and Glasgow, from Leicester, Nottingham, Leeds, and Bradford, from Manchester and Stockport, in a word, from all the great manufacturing towns, with the exception, perhaps, of those in the western district, in which there is little indication of disease produced by early and

excessive labour, shows that grievous and incurable maladies do result in young persons from labour commenced in the factory at the age at which it is at present not uncommon to begin it, and continued for the number of hours during which it is not unusual to protract it.

6. "From the same evidence it appears, that the physical evil inflicted on children by factory labour, when commenced as early and continued as long as it now is, is not the only evil sustained by them. From the statements and depositions of witnesses of all classes it appears, that even when the employment of children at so early an age, and for so many hours as is customary at present, produces no manifest bodily disease, yet in the great majority of cases it incapacitates them from receiving instruction. On this head the statements of the children themselves must be admitted to be of some importance; and it will be found that the young children very generally declare that they are too much fatigued to attend school, even when a school is provided for them. This is more uniformly the declaration of the children in the factories of Scotland than in those of England. The evidence of other witnesses, both as to the capacity of the children for receiving instruction, and as to their actual state in regard to education, is conflicting. Few will be prepared

to expect the statements that will be found on this head in regard to Scotland, where the education of the children is neglected to a far greater extent than is commonly believed ; where only a very small number can write ; where, though perhaps the majority can read, many cannot ; and where, with some honourable exceptions, it seems certain that the care once bestowed on the instruction of the young has ceased to be exemplary. The reports of the Commissioners for Scotland, who will be found to have kept this subject continually before their view, are decisive on this head. "Many of the persons sworn could not write nor sign their depositions. The reports mark the signatures in every case where the parties could write. I suspect the want of education so general on the part of these people, which has surprised me, is to be attributed to their being for so long a period of the day confined to the factories." "The overseers of the small mills, when the proprietors are absent, almost uniformly, as the Central Board will notice, declare their aversion to the present long hours of working, as injurious to the health of the workers, and as rendering their education impossible." "Still the employment of workers in factories cannot, where proper regulations are attended to, be in most cases with propriety termed an unhealthy one ;

and it would therefore seem that the long confinement of labour is more injurious to them, in preventing them from being sufficiently educated, and of course sufficiently instructed in their moral duties, than in other respects. Here too, although there is abundance of evidence from clergymen, as well as from teachers, of a conflicting description, I think it upon the whole impossible to doubt, that the young workers must be so much fatigued with the very long hours of labour, that they cannot be so fit to receive instruction as other young people, and that they have too little time for being at school, even to enable them to learn to read, write, and to understand accounts tolerably. Want of education cannot fail to have an unfavourable influence on their morals."

"One of the great evils to which people employed in factories are exposed is, the danger of receiving serious and even fatal injury from the machinery. It does not seem possible, by any precautions that are practicable, to remove this danger altogether. There are factories in which every thing is done that it seems practicable to do to reduce this danger to the least possible amount, and with such success that no serious accident happens for years together. By the returns which we have received, however, it appears that there are other factories, and that these are by no

means few in number, nor confined to the smaller mills, in which serious accidents are continually occurring, and in which, notwithstanding, dangerous parts of the machinery are allowed to remain unfenced. The greater the carelessness of the proprietors in neglecting sufficiently to fence the machinery, and the greater the number of accidents, the less their sympathy with the sufferers. In factories in which precaution is taken to prevent accidents, care is taken of the workpeople when they do occur, and a desire is shown to make what compensation may be possible. But it appears in evidence that cases frequently occur in which the workpeople are abandoned from the moment that an accident occurs; their wages are stopped, no medical attendance is provided, and whatever the extent of the injury, no compensation is afforded.

“From the whole of the evidence laid before us, of which we have thus endeavoured to exhibit the material points, we find —

“1st. That the children employed in all the principal branches of manufacture throughout the kingdom work during the same number of hours as the adults.

“2nd. That the effects of labour during such are, in a great number of cases,

“Permanent deterioration of the physical constitution :

“The production of disease often wholly irremediable : and

“The partial or entire exclusion (by reason of excessive fatigue) from the means of obtaining adequate education and acquiring useful habits, or of profiting by those means when afforded.

“ 3d. That at the age when children suffer these injuries from the labour they undergo, they are not free agents, but are let out to hire, the wages they earn being received and appropriated by their parents and guardians.

“ We are therefore of opinion that a case is made out for the interference of the Legislature in behalf of the children employed in factories.”

Such, then, was the result of an investigation carried on—not by persons prejudiced against the master manufacturers, but by men whose selection was the act of those upon whom the mill-owners clearly exerted considerable influence. Admitting the Commissioners to have been fairly chosen and to have shewn no bias *towards* the masters,—and this is a very large concession to make,—still it is quite certain that of any bias *against* the masters, they were wholly innocent. And their

report, let it be distinctly understood, fully established all the main propositions enunciated by Mr. Sadler, and shewed his proposed Bill to be, in the main, just and necessary.

After such as a result as this, it was clearly impossible for the government to avoid immediate legislation. In fact, if not too prompt, they were in one sense singularly hasty. A very strange course was taken. This commission was appointed, professedly in order to ascertain whether or not an evil existed; and also, what would be the best remedy to apply. Yet, oddly enough, after sending forth this Commission, the government proceeded to legislate without waiting for its return!

A Bill was brought into Parliament, and some progress made in it, before the Commissioners had returned to town, or made their report. This singular step seemed to indicate two things; namely, first, a real anxiety, on the part of Lord Althorp, a man of a feeling and benevolent mind, to do something in a matter which he evidently saw to be one of clear and urgent necessity: and, secondly, a distinct admission, that the expedient of the Commission was chiefly intended to gain time; and not *bona fide*, to obtain information.

It would not, however, be relevant to our present purpose, to pursue this subject much further.

It has been already seen that to Mr. Sadler it is owing, that the evil was placed in so strong and clear a light, as to render some movement in redress unavoidable. Had his whole parliamentary life produced no other fruit this, he would not have entered the House of Commons in vain.

The measure finally adopted by Lord Althorp, in 1833, justified all the worst anticipations of the friends of the factory-children, It gave, it is true, some relief to a particular class of infants,—and, indeed, it would have been difficult to have framed any measure which should not have wrought some good ;—but, with its scanty measure of protection, were combined provisos which deprived the labourers of divers of the safeguards which they had previously possessed. The penalties affixed to convictions for cruelty were in many cases absurdly and unaccountably lowered, so as to become altogether trivial to the wealthy mill-owner : the period within which informations were required to be laid, was limited : parties having a collateral interest in mills, were permitted to sit on the bench ; and in a variety of ways, facilities were given for the evasion of justice. The appointment of Inspectors, and the greater degree of attention now paid to the subject by the press, has doubtless wrought a considerable improvement within the last ten years : but of

the Bill of 1833, it may be almost doubted whether it were more beneficial or injurious.

In truth, the only really effective measure would be that, concerning the justice and necessity of which, Mr. Sadler never wavered ;—a Bill for restricting the labour of children and young persons to ten hours *per diem*. Of any real and substantial improvement in the condition of the factory-labourers, this must be the foundation. Starting from any other point than this, is to begin by denying the claims of humanity ; and it would be an inversion of the natural order of things, if the setting out on a wrong path, should conduct at last to the right end. If our moral arithmetic commence by hesitating as to whether two and two make four, it will lead to the perversion of right and truth, in the affairs of thousands and tens of thousands.

The common sense of mankind has long since decided, that twelve hours is a working man's day of labour ; divided between two hours for meals and ten for work. The proposition is, that little children should be protected by law, from being tasked with a longer day's work than the full-grown man. This is what the Ten Hour Bill asks ;—it provides for ten hours actual labour, leaving two for meals. When the legislature of England has had to deal with malefactors at home,

or with negro slaves abroad, it has ever admitted, without difficulty, this principle. It has never tolerated the idea, that convicts in our hulks, or negroes in our colonies, should be borne down with more than a full and fair day's labour. It is only to our own children,—to little girls and boys, born and bred up among us, untainted with any crime, and having the highest claim on our protection,—that this justice is denied. It is only when these, worn out with ceaseless toil, their limbs bending and distorting under the burden, call to us for sympathy,—it is only to these that we turn a deaf ear, and exclaim, “ Trade must not be interfered with ! ”

But their cause must finally prevail. It is the fashion to exclaim, almost with cuckoo-note, of many a nostrum in politics, “ It is only a question of *time* :—sooner or later the point must be conceded.” With how much more truth and reason, may we adopt this language in the present case ; and say : “ The common feelings of humanity will not permit us to relax in our pursuit of this object : *Persist we must*, until justice be done. Nor can we doubt of the final result. That love of justice, and that sympathy for the oppressed, which distinguish Englishmen, afford us a certain hope of ultimate success. The question can only be one of *time*. There can be but one termination of this controversy.”

We have also great cause to be thankful, that when Mr. Sadler's retirement from Parliament, and his failing health, rendered it impossible for him to do more in the cause, the duty was assumed by one in every way qualified to discharge it. In Lord Ashley, these poor children have an advocate of the most single-hearted faithfulness, and the most unshrinking perseverance. It is, necessary, however, that the public support should be promptly and earnestly given to his Lordship's endeavours ; and that the case, in itself so clear and unanswerable, should be constantly pressed upon the notice of the legislature

It would hardly be right to forget, in this place, a short and simple ballad, written by Mr. Sadler during the Parliamentary discussion, and founded entirely on a fact given in evidence before the Committee of which he was chairman.

THE FACTORY GIRL'S LAST DAY.

“ ’Twas on a winter's morning,
 The weather wet and wild,
 Three hours before the dawning
 The father roused his child ;
 Her daily morsel bringing,
 The darksome room he paced,
 And cried, ‘ The bell is ringing,
 My hapless darling, haste !’

‘ Father, I’m up, but weary,
I scarce can reach the door,
And long the way and dreary,—
O carry me once more !
To help us we’ve no mother ;
And you have no employ ;
They killed my little brother,—
Like him I’ll work and die !’

Her wasted form seemed nothing,—
The load was at his heart ;
The sufferer he kept soothing
Till at the mill they part.
The overlooker met her,
As to her frame she crept,
And with his thong he beat her,
And cursed her as she wept.

Alas ! what hours of horror
Made up her latest day ;
In toil, and pain, and sorrow,
They slowly passed away :
It seemed, as she grew weaker,
The threads the oftener broke,
The rapid wheels ran quicker,
And heavier fell the stroke.

The sun had long descended,
But night brought no repose ;
Her day began and ended
As cruel tyrants chose.
At length a little neighbour
Her halfpenny she paid,
To take her last hour’s labour,
While by her frame she laid.

At last, the engine ceasing,
The captives homeward rushed ;
She thought her strength increasing—
'Twas hope her spirits flushed :
She left, but oft she tarried ;
She fell and rose no more,
Till, by her comrades carried,
She reached her father's door.

All night, with tortured feeling,
He watched his speechless child ;
While, close beside her kneeling,
She knew him not, nor smiled.
Again the factory's ringing
Her last perceptions tried ;
When, from her straw-bed springing,
' 'Tis time ! ' she shrieked, and died !

That night a chariot passed her,
While on the ground she lay ;
The daughters of her master
An evening visit pay :
Their tender hearts were sighing
As negro wrongs were told,
While the white slave lay dying
Who gained their father's gold ! ”

With his earnest and laborious advocacy of this great question, closed Mr. Sadler's public life. The Reform bill received the Royal Assent on the 7th of June, 1832 ; on the 16th of August, the Houses were prorogued ; and on the 3rd of the following December, the Dissolution took

place. The borough for which he sat, had been included in Schedule A, and in the next Parliament Mr. Sadler had no seat.

It might easily be made a ground for much grave reprehension of the Reform Bill,—that a man like Mr. Sadler, who, to a remarkable extent, devoted his whole time and powerful talents,—not to his own aggrandisement, or the furtherance of the views of his party; but to the great object of the improvement of the condition of the great mass of the people,—it might, we repeat, be made to redound greatly to the disgrace of that measure, that such a man should have been, by it, excluded from a seat in the legislature. But, considering dispassionately all the circumstances of the case, we are not inclined to lay this charge at the door of the Reform Bill. We believe that Mr. Sadler might have been returned, in the most gratifying and honourable manner, for many different constituencies; had not circumstances fallen out, more than once or twice, in a peculiarly unfortunate manner. He was led, again and again, to decline most desirable offers, and to close with others which ended in failure. At the general election which took place in December 1832, he was induced, by the entreaties of great numbers of his neighbours, to offer himself for his own town of Leeds, then just enfranchised. In their eyes, and

in the eyes of all the better part of the community, their town would have been greatly honored by the acquisition of such a representative. By these solicitations he was induced to neglect other offers, more than one of which was of a promising character. But the contest for Leeds, though gallantly fought, never presented more than a faint hope of success. In the way of his success, as a candidate, there were peculiar difficulties. Although his efforts in behalf of the poor, and especially in behalf of the Factory-children, had enlisted a warm feeling in his favor among the working classes; yet these, unfortunately, could offer him but few votes. On the other hand, the great manufacturers, whose influence in such a town as Leeds must necessarily be quite the predominant one, were for the most part alienated from him, by those very efforts which had gained him friends among the poor. His Bill for the protection of the infant labourers was regarded by them as a measure of restriction and annoyance, and almost of pains and penalties; and its provisions were considered to be levelled directly against them. It naturally, therefore, became a prominent, if not an avowed object with many of them, to keep its author and principal promoter out of parliament. The bitterest animosity was exhibited towards

him.* The Whig and Dissenting interest of the town thus became really, though silently strengthened by the aid of many who were actuated by the lowest and most degraded personal motives. And the contest ended in Mr. Sadler's obtaining 1596 votes, while his competitor, Mr. Macaulay, received 1984.

* As one instance of this, we copy the following public apology, advertised in May 1833, in the Leeds papers, by two of his principal local antagonists,

“PUBLIC NOTICE.”

“A Paragraph headed “Caution to Manufacturers,” having appeared in the *Leeds Mercury* of the 18th inst. imputing to “a gentleman (Mr. S.) late Candidate for the Representation of this Borough, that he had threatened a Manufacturer in the following words,—viz.—“Sir, if I met you ON A DARK NIGHT, with a pistol in my hand, I WOULD SHOOT YOU,” and having received from that gentlemen, an assurance that we gave an *entirely false* representation of the conversation; we have made such enquiries, as have satisfied us that the imputation conveyed by the paragraph, is WHOLLY FALSE; and we beg therefore to apologize to him, for the insertion of the paragraph, and to express our regret that we have been led by the information we had received to publish it.”

“We were prepared to have given a further public expression of our regret for the injury which such a paragraph was calculated to inflict on his character; but have to acknowledge his forbearance in waving it.”

EDWARD BAINES & SON.

Proprietors and Publishers of the *Leeds Mercury*.”

“*Leeds, May 22. 1833.*”

Thus was Mr. Sadler sent back into private life. But the want of his presence in the house of Commons was so generally felt by great numbers of the people, in every part of the kingdom, that on every opportunity schemes were agitated, for again calling him from his retirement. Marylebone was one among several constituencies so applying. But he acceded to none of these entreaties until the opening of the year 1834. At that period the two boroughs of Leeds and Huddersfield each besought him to become a candidate. For a short time he hesitated,—Leeds seeming to have the prior claim; but Huddersfield appearing to offer a certainty of success. The constituency was but small; the town was treated as a nomination-borough by the chief proprietor, Sir John Ramsden, and both Tories and Radicals desired to throw off his yoke. The union of these two parties would have given a clear majority of the electors; and they offered to combine, to return Mr. Sadler. Upon this understanding Mr. Sadler relinquished all thoughts of standing for Leeds, and accepted their invitation. Suddenly, however, on the very eve of the election, the Radicals deserted him, started a candidate of their own, and thus ensured the success of Sir John Ramsden's nominee. The poll closed with these numbers,

Mr. Blackburne.	234
Mr. Sadler.	147
Capt. Wood.	108

And thus, a second time, Mr. Sadler was foiled in his purpose of reentering Parliament. After this he never again became a candidate.

The general election which took place in January 1835, brought him anew, a variety of applications. The people of Birmingham were particularly urgent ; but from South Durham he received offers of support from quarters which could have ensured success. At this period, however, his health had decidedly given way, and the disorder which ultimately ended his life, was already making rapid inroads on his constitution. He was therefore obliged, however reluctantly, to concede to the representations of his medical advisers, and to return a negative answer to all applications of this description.

In May 1834, having paid a visit to Belfast, at which place the firm with which he was connected had extensive works, he was greatly pleased with the town and neighbourhood, and resolved on fixing his future residence there. Here the short remainder of his life was spent,—chiefly in projecting and carrying forward various literary plans, connected with the great subject which was ever uppermost in his mind,—the wrongs and the necessities of

the labouring poor. The advances of disease, however, prevented the completion of any of them. Two of these, of which he had sketched the outline, would have been of great and lasting value. The one was, an address to the people of England, on the Rights and Wrongs of the Poor ;—intended to exhibit the gradual, but unceasing encroachments of Capital upon Industry, during especially the last three or four centuries.

The other was, a Commentary on the National Institutions given by Moses, under Divine inspiration, to the Jews. On some of the leading ideas of this work, we may, perhaps, hereafter venture to dilate. In the remaining chapters, our chief duty will be, to exhibit Mr. Sadler's views and principles on one or two important topics which have not yet been adverted to.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEW POOR LAW OF 1834.

It now becomes our duty, in endeavouring to sketch an outline of Mr. Sadler's character and principles, to explain, before we pass on to the termination of our narrative, his views on one or two subjects of paramount importance, which occupied his thoughts in the interim between his leaving Parliament, and the close of his life. Among these, perhaps the most prominent, and that which most intensely agitated his mind, was, the Act for the Amendment of the Poor Laws of England, proposed by Lord Althorp, and carried through Parliament in the year 1834. No other subject could have so deeply interested him ; and no other discussion would have caused equal regrets at his seclusion from Parliament. His correspondence at this period shewed how entirely

his mind was occupied with the question ; and how repugnant the leading features of the new measure were, to every feeling of his soul.

In alluding to this subject it is necessary to guard against misconstruction and misrepresentation, on two or three preliminary points. Mr. Sadler never thought, and never would have said, that the existing law, as it stood in 1834, covered as it was, with patches and excrescences, many of which had been fabricated in a Malthusian spirit, —he never would have argued that the law as it stood was perfect and faultless ; still less would he have denied that in its administration, particularly in some agricultural districts, it had been rendered odious by the introduction of divers gross abuses. That a very great change was absolutely required, is fully admitted, and dwelt upon at some length, in his lectures on the Poor Laws, already adverted to, the MS. of which now lies before us. That the government of 1834, then, did right in grappling with the subject, and in boldly proposing a searching and extensive measure, may be readily and fully conceded. This admission, however, forms no justification of their having proposed what in itself was positively wrong. A necessity for doing something cannot be admitted to be identical with a necessity for doing mischief.

In the next place Mr. Sadler would doubtless

have readily admitted, the personal humanity and good intentions of the propounder of the measure, Lord Althorp, and some of its chief promoters. Among the names subscribed to the Report which introduced and recommended the measure, were those of two prelates of the highest character. Nor ought we to forget that in all they said and did on this question, they only acted precisely as one of the brightest ornaments of the Scottish church would have counselled ;—they only carried out a portion of the plans and recommendations of Dr. Chalmers! These considerations cannot, indeed, change right into wrong, or induce us to give up the word of God for the dogmas of Mr. Malthus ; but they should teach us moderation in censure, and caution in its application. We may feel assured that these great and good men were wrong,—lamentably wrong,—but their support of even the atrocities of Malthus should teach us “not to be high-minded, but rather to fear.” If *they* have erred, who among the sons of men can claim to be infallible ?

And, while we are thus discharging the duty of just concession, let us add,—what Mr. Sadler did not live long enough to witness,—that it is unquestionably true that in many individual parishes and districts, great benefits have followed the introduction of the new system. A reasonable and reflect-

ing man will understand that this admission is not at all inconsistent with an utter disapproval of the system *as a whole*. To grant that a tyrant,—as in the recent case of the French usurper,—may achieve many great and admirable works,—in no way disturbs our verdict, either against despotism in the abstract, or against the individual tyrant in particular. There were, unhappily, in 1833, several parishes, perhaps we might say *many* parishes in England, in which by long mismanagement ; by forcing all the labourers into pauperism ; by putting them up to auction, week by week ; and by depriving honest industry of all motive and all reward,—the whole mass of the labourers had become hopeless, reckless, and destitute alike of energy and all self-respect. In such a state of things almost any possible change must have operated an immediate improvement. We have seen instances in which, by at once drawing the line between the labourer and the pauper ; and compelling the latter class to seclude themselves within the walls of the Workhouse, while all who remained free, were enabled to demand and to obtain at least wages enough to support their existence,—we have seen instances, we repeat, in which even the mere introduction of this simple and obvious rule has at once revolutionized a whole village. Under the former system, all were

receiving parish pay ; all were half-idle ; careless, thankless, and ready for any evil purpose. Under the new one, those who laboured, were paid by those for whom they laboured ; eat the bread which they themselves had earned ; were furnished, by those who hired them, with sufficient occupation ; and had thus been raised no inconsiderable step in the scale of society ; while on the other hand, those who were compelled to claim parochial relief, were shut up from the public gaze, and suffered the privation of a portion of their own freedom. Thus the pauper was no longer an idle stroller in the market-place ; but, if not utterly incapacitated, or utterly worthless, he became anxious to gain employment, and glad to escape from the ranks of pauperism.

We readily admit, then, the absolute necessity which existed, for a change ; the unquestionable philanthropy of several of those who counselled, and especially of the nobleman who proposed the new system ; and also the great benefits which have, in many places, instantly followed its adoption. And yet, notwithstanding all this, we must maintain, with Mr. Sadler, that the New Poor Law was a cruel and unjustifiable enactment.

1. It was conceived in a wrong spirit.

This was especially observable in the Report of certain commissioners of enquiry, whose repre-

sentations, when laid upon the table of Parliament, became the basis upon which the measure itself was founded.

The duty of these Commissioners was abundantly clear. Their first object should have been, to discover in what districts the existing law worked satisfactorily ; and what were the features which especially characterized those districts. They should then have contrasted these with other parishes, in which a different and an unsatisfactory state of things prevailed ; and they should have carefully searched out the causes of the difference. In this way, and in this way only, they would have made the path clear to a real and practical improvement of the whole system.

Had they taken this obvious course, they would have found certain parishes in England in which pauperism scarcely had any existence ; in which the contribution paid by the rich was so light as to be quite trivial ; and in which the poor, without any considerable aid from the wealthy, were all comfortable and happy. And they would have found the main cause of all this to be, that the landlord, in each instance, felt and acted towards the poor as a fellow-creature “ of the same blood :” That he cared for them ; and loved to see them happy : That he took care that each should have a comfortable dwelling ; with a sufficient garden ; thus

affording them present comfort, and holding out a possibility of advancement; while hope excited industry; and kindness rewarded good conduct.

But such facts as these were not sought out by these Commissioners; or rather, we should say, they were positively avoided. The Malthusian system utterly contemned all kindness to the poor, as tending to encourage the growth of a “surplus population.” Dr. Chalmers had already ridiculed “the cottage-and-cow-system,” and accordingly, whenever that system came in the way of the Commissioners, it was invariably slighted, or misrepresented.

The following passages from a periodical work which appeared in 1833, very shortly after the publication of this Report, will spare us the trouble of going more at length into this part of the question.

“The Poor-law Commission was well described, a few months back, in *Cobbett's Magazine*, in the following passage:—

“These men have gone off, bearing with them a fund of philosophical prejudice against poor-laws, ‘population,’ ‘improvident marriages,’—and all the whole system and routine of nature; and their object has been to furnish the grounds for imputing all sorts of crimes to the labouring people; grounds for calling them idle, malicious, improvi-

dent, riotous, fraudulent, and prolific ; for calling the old-fashioned overseer, *unskilful*, incautious, and unworthy of trust ; for charging the magistrates with unnecessary profuseness ; and for the other purpose of connecting all these bad results with the unavoidable practice of the poor-laws. We believe there are two classes of persons who would hunt down our poor and our poor-laws together. The first is, that class who suffer in their pockets from poor-laws ; who have pawned their property to the fundholders ; and have had the engagement doubled by Peel's bill ; these find that there is nothing left for them so long as the poor have *their* share of the produce of the earth, and the fundholders have *their* share. This makes people of property wince under the burden of the poor-rates. The other class consists of frantic speculators, who live for the greater part in London ; and have become ' possessed of a devil,'—an idea that the earth does not, and cannot, produce food enough for us who are upon it ; and who have found that little children are the greatest of curses ; that early marriages are among the greatest of crimes ; that to give the means of existence is to give a ' stimulus to population ;' that laws for the relief of the poor, which have been in existence upwards of two hundred years, have, within the last forty, begun to make the labouring people first

poor, then idle, then prolific, then fraudulent, then riotous, and that they are proceeding to lead to no one knows what, unless they be timely checked by laws founded upon the suggestions of this set of Commissioners.”

* * * * *

“ In this strong and pernicious bias (of the Commissioners,) we find merely what we had previously expected. But, certainly, in their official acts we meet with a more unblushing manifestation of that bias than we could have calculated upon. The whole volume of “ Evidence published by authority,” is nothing more or less than a broad, open, barefaced attempt to establish certain assumptions of the Malthus party, by evidence picked and culled with the greatest care, and from which is excluded with equal anxiety, all the principal facts which would tend to destroy those assumptions.

“ One of the most vital questions, as it regards the peasantry of England, that can possibly be named at the present moment, is that of “ *Cottage Allotments*.” We, on our part, are perfectly satisfied of their great utility. But we are aware that some persons of intelligence and respectability have taken up a different view. We are therefore quite willing that the facts of the case should be inquired into ; only desiring a fair and impartial investigation, and being ready to abide the issue.

“ But how have these Commissioners conducted this enquiry ? Scores, nay hundreds, of cases might have been met with, in which this method of ameliorating the condition of the poor has been adopted, and in which the results might have been ascertained. Especially, and above all others, ought they to have reported the facts connected with Mr. Estcourt’s estates ; on which estates, by means of this very system, the poor-rates, in a parish of 3,000 acres, had been reduced to 171*l.* in 1829, although in 1801 they had been 332*l.*

“ But no ! this would have ill-suited their purpose. The Board itself, and its agents, the travelling Commissioners, are all of the same opinion with the amiable Miss Harriet Martineau,—namely, that “ cottage allotments are very bad things ;” for that “ nothing tends so much to *increase population.*” Therefore their eyes were closed against a multitude of similar cases, and they do not allude to the subject, in the whole of their voluminous “ extracts,” above four or five times.

“ These few times, however, they could scarcely avoid its introduction. But how do they handle the facts which are presented to them ? In a very curious manner ; in a manner curious for its mendacity and effrontery.

“ Immediately we opened the volume we turned instinctively to this point. We knew that the

Allotment system was pre-eminently hated and dreaded by the Malthusians, and we naturally felt a little curiosity to see how they would deal with the facts which would every where present themselves, at variance with their favorite theory. We found that the volume opened with an *Index*; which is not quite the ordinary arrangement, as indexes are usually placed at the end. But we soon discovered the object of this innovation. This index is both descriptive and explanatory, and not only informs the reader what he may expect to find on any given page, but also what deductions he ought to draw from the facts therein contained. Beyond doubt, it is the most officious and didactic "index" that we ever had the good or ill fortune to encounter.

"Under the head of "Cottage Allotments," we found, as we expected, a "plentiful lack" of information. The topic, all-important as it was, was only alluded to four or five times. Among these notices, in the index, we observed the two following :—

"*Small* gardens for the *mere* occupation of after-hours, as a *mere* amusement, morally good ; 41."

"*Ultimate bad* effects of large allotments, hidden by *small immediate* advantages ; 16, 40, 43."

"So said the index. We turned to the pages "41, 16, 40, 43 ;" and were certainly not a little

astonished—even knowing, as we did, the lengths to which “economists” will sometimes go,—to find that all the important matter described in this argumentative index, was neither more nor less than a *downright fabrication* ! Certain facts are said to be stated in certain pages of the work ; but when you turn to those pages, no such facts are there, nor anything in the least resembling them.

“ The index tells you, that at page 41, *small* gardens for *mere* amusement are proved to be good. The fact is, that at page 41, not a word is said of *small* gardens, or of *mere amusement*, but, on the contrary, allotments of *land* are shewn to be really *useful* and *valuable* to the poor as *means* of *subsistence*. At the other three pages, you are instructed to expect something about the “ *ultimate bad effects* ;” but when you turn to those pages you find not a single syllable of the kind ;—not a word about any bad effects whatever ! “ *Small* immediate advantages” are spoken of in the index, and when you read the page referred to, you find that these “ *small* advantages” consist in a great reduction of the poor-rates, even in the short space of two years ; and an entire change in the conduct and character of the poor, converting them from miserable incendiaries into a comfortable and industrious peasantry, ready to guard instead of destroying their master’s property. These are the

things which this index-maker calls “*small advantages.*” And this is the sort of “Report” which the nation is to pay for, and which it is to be insulted by seeing “published by authority.”

This brief example sufficiently exhibited the *animus* of the Commission : And this *animus* governed the whole proceeding, down to the final enactment of the Bill ; and onward to the constitution of the Board, and its general system, as gradually matured and carried out. Two grand errors were perceptible throughout : *Theory*, and that a most false and baseless theory, was consulted instead of *fact* : and the chief reliance of the framers of the measure, for the governance of the poor, was placed upon Fear, rather than upon Hope. But this leads us to observe, that

2. The new system proceeded, in its dealings with the poor, upon a wrong principle.

In Mr. Sadler’s Lectures on the Poor Laws, delivered in Leeds in the year 1825, of which we have already spoken, he both fully recognized the evils of the existing system ; and also indicated the true way in which the poor ought to be dealt with.

“That idleness has resulted, and to a great extent, from the Poor Laws as they have been administered, I shall not attempt to deny ; that it is one of the greatest demoralizers of human beings is

equally incontrovertible ; hence it is hardly possible to overrate the pernicious consequences that have ensued. But these might have been avoided in many cases, even under the present system, which I acknowledge to be very defective on this point, especially in reference to the existing state of society. Instead of which, the parochial officers, as the easiest method of getting through their temporary duties, have too frequently supported the poor when out of employment, without setting them to labour ; and have thereby offered such a temptation—indeed, literally speaking, bounty,—to idleness, as it is impossible for human nature, in many cases, to withstand. Add to this ; the practice, especially in agricultural districts, of eking out wages absolutely insufficient for subsistence, by parochial additions ; and furthermore, the improper interference of the Magistrates, in innumerable instances, with the duties of the parochial officer, either from mistaken humanity or more questionable motives ; so as to destroy at once the proper authority as well as mutual feeling which should subsist, between the two ranks of a parish ; and we perceive the degradation to which the whole system has been unjustly sunk ; till its very principle is rendered obnoxious to numbers of the community.

“ Having now pointed out the evils, whether

necessarily or accidentally attaching themselves to our present system, I proceed to the far more important and difficult part of my subject, that of proposing adequate remedies; without doing which, I feel that all that I have previously advanced would be worse than useless, and could not even have the apology of having been dictated by a proper or benevolent motive.

“ The disease of this system, as has been stated, is the confounding in one mass, the deserving, and the profligate or idle poor; and, by treating all alike, extinguishing the hope, if not the possibility, of the former ever distinguishing themselves from the latter. The remedy, therefore, can only be found in the restoration of some *motives*, the exhibition of some *advantages*, to those who would then, in many instances at least, rise again in character and in condition; and with themselves would as certainly elevate the mass of that numerous and interesting class.

“ I therefore lay it down as my initiatory maxim, that in any attempt to better the character and condition of the poor, you must present to them some motive beyond mere argument; the disinterestedness of which they will always justly question, and which alone, will never generally or ultimately produce any beneficial effect. The plan proposed may be never so promising: the

theory as beautiful and well-proportioned in all its parts as the creative wisdom of man can make it ; but if it have not *Hope*, as its inspiring principle, it can never move ; it can never live."

Nothing more true, nothing more certain, was ever uttered ; and in the present case the prediction has been instantly and entirely fulfilled. Notwithstanding the good which the wholesome severity of the new law has in many districts effected ; and which we shall not for an instant attempt to deny ;—still, as a whole, and viewing the country as one mass, it must be admitted to have substantially failed ; inasmuch as instead of having satisfied the poor themselves, or having attached them to the institutions of the country,—it has created a deep and settled disgust, from one end of the country to the other ; and forms, at this instant, one of the greatest grounds of disquietude, in the minds of those who are acquainted with the working-classes, and know their feelings and their sentiments. Such are fully aware, that instead of helping to bind together in unity and confidence, the different classes of the community, the new system has vastly augmented the alienation and distrust which before existed. And the root of all this mischief, is,—that the law proceeds by force, not kindness ; that it appeals to the motive of Fear, not to that of Hope ; and that it offers no-

thing, provides nothing, gives nothing, to the poor man ; but rather *takes away*.

Every one now understands, that this law is generally regarded with aversion by those who are likely to fall under its operation ; and that to reenact it in its full extent, would be to risque the peace and tranquillity of the realm. But perhaps we may reasonably be expected to go beyond these generalities ; and to point out those features in the system, as usually put in operation, which render it hateful to a large part of the population. In an instance or two, merely as an example, we will endeavour to do so.

Among the *first* points of objection to the new system, may be named, *The great extent of the unions* formed under it ; from which massing together of large districts, many evils inevitably spring.

One abuse which the framers of the Bill naturally desired to abate, was the absolute and ill-used power, which, in small agricultural parishes, necessarily fell into the hands of a few large farmers. To guard against their despotic acts, it was thought advisable to form Boards of Guardians, by calling together one or two representatives of some twelve or twenty parishes, and thus constituting a more numerous body, by which it was supposed that all unjust or illegal acts would be avoided.

Had these Unions been made smaller,—say of

six parishes each ; and had the resident pastor of each parish been made an *ex-officio* member, together with every inhabitant householder whose dwelling was rated at 50£ per annum,—the probability is, that great good would have resulted. More public spirit, more Christian sympathy, and more pecuniary liberality would have been introduced into the management of the poor ; the labouring classes would have felt their condition improved ; and by that feeling their regard for the institutions of the nation would have been sensibly augmented.

But a board consisting of twenty farmers, one from each of twenty parishes, even though two or three magistrates should add their names, and sometimes give their attendance, is scarcely an improvement on the older Select Vestry system. Very little “fresh blood” is introduced. The same “separate caste” spirit still prevails. The personal knowledge of, and sympathy for, each individual pauper, is far less than before. The aggregate, too, of labour, imposed upon the Board, is vastly increased ; and of course the work is more hastily and cursorily done.

One bad consequence connected with this excessive extent of the Unions, consists in the inevitable hardships thereby inflicted on the poor. Not only does a poor labourer, reduced to want, lose nearly

all the advantage of previous character, in being obliged to appeal for sympathy to a board consisting chiefly of strangers ; but in many cases frightful suffering is inevitably caused, by the distance of the place of relief, from the persons to be relieved.

“ A man starving for food applies to the overseer for assistance ; he is told to make an application to the board of guardians. To effect that purpose, this poor creature has to walk a distance of *twelve* miles. Owing to the pauper having miscalculated his time, he arrives too late ; he finds the board broken up, and he is compelled to retrace his weary steps without having received even a promise of relief.” *

A *second* ground of complaint is found in the extent to which the separation of children from parents, and husbands from wives, has been carried.

No one will contend, that an idle man and woman, in the prime of life, are to be taken into the workhouse, there to live in indolence and breed paupers. But why extend this prohibition to aged couples, who having lived in industry and harmony for 30 or 40 years, are now reduced to poverty, and find their sole remaining comfort in each other's society ? What is it but pure gratuitous cruelty, to

* Debate in the House of Commons, Sept. 28, 1841.

insist upon tearing them from each other, for no conceivable public end ?

So of mothers, and their young children. Conceding that at a certain age, boys and girls should be sent to school or to labour, still, where is the utility of taking the very young, and even infants from the breast, and cooping them up apart from their mothers ?

A *third* grievance has arisen from the refusal of out-door relief ; or in the diminution of such relief to a point which is tantamount to half-starvation. The recent modifications agreed upon by the commissioners, may reduce the hardship first alluded to,—but the penuriousness of the relief given, will, it is to be feared, still continue. What is it but cruelty to force a poor old woman,—as is often done,—to drag her weary limbs, some twelve or fourteen miles, going and returning, merely to receive a single loaf as her whole allowance for a week !

While this page is before us, the following samples of the working of the new system offer themselves. “ On Sunday week, at the parish of Bransby, near Stow, William Presswood, a labourer and cottager, was found by his wife in a shed near to his house, hanging to a beam ; her screams were heard by Mr. Tayler, the constable, who immediately ran to the place, and cut the poor man down, but life was quite extinct. Mr. Hitchins

held an inquest on the body on Monday. The picture of real distress which presented itself was of the most painful nature, the widow in the agony of despair, surrounded by seven children, the eldest not more than ten years of age. The evidence went to show, that the deceased was an industrious, honest, and persevering man, who was desirous, if possible, of bringing up his family by the labour of his own hands. Some time back, he was afflicted by Providence with an illness which deprived him of the power of working. He applied reluctantly for relief ; he belonged to Welton, in the Lincoln Union, but he lived out of the union, and in that of Gainsborough. It being a case of emergency, Gainsborough gave him relief, but on his getting better, the relief was taken off, and the deceased and his family were left in a state of destitution ; he applied to Lincoln Union, but having a cow, which by industry he had saved, and a pig, which was to support his family, the test, the workhouse, was applied, and he and his wife and seven children came into the workhouse. After a time they again went out, but no further relief was given them,—the deceased struggled hard against adverse fortune, but as one of the witnesses expressed it, “ the iron had struck deep into his soul,” and he could not get over the degradation of having been in the workhouse ; it preyed upon his

mind, and at length he fell a victim.—The jury, in recording their verdict of Insanity, expressed it as their unanimous opinion, that if the parish of Welton had contributed even a little to assist him, he might have overcome the difficulty, and have been still the protector of his now destitute family.”*

A second case is as follows ;—

“ Mary Lane, aged 25, has recently been left a widow, with two boys ; one two years old, the second ten weeks old : the eldest of them being a cripple. The mother is a woman of unquestionably good character. At the sitting of the Board of Guardians of the Hampnett union, this widow applied for the small allowance of 2s. per week ; with the aid of which she could maintain herself and her two children. The application was refused, and an order of admission to the house tendered, instead of any allowance, however small. The effect of this would be, that the elder boy, the cripple, would be parted from his mother entirely : the younger would be brought to her three times a day to be suckled, till the time for weaning should come : and the mother herself would be thrown into the promiscuous mass of the inmates.”†

A third instance is to the following effect :—

In the parish of Donnington, Berkshire, before

* *Boston Herald*, July 6, 1841.

† Correspondent of *the Times*, Oct. 28, 1841.

a coroner's inquest, Harriet Alder stated, " My husband had only been able to do a day's work this summer, being so ill. For that he received a shilling. That was the last time he went to work. Having a child myself, of eleven weeks old, besides others, I was not able to go out. My husband went to the relieving-officer three or four times within the last six weeks, and stated the distress we were in, but was refused relief. He went again last Friday, and got an order for two gallons of bread. On *Tuesday* I went to the board of guardians, and received an order to go into the house on *Saturday* next, Oct. 9. On the *Thursday* my husband died." The verdict was, " That Alder's death was accelerated by the want of the common necessities of life."*

Now we feel no hesitation in declaring our conviction, that the harshness shewn in all these cases, and which is as unwise, as it is unfeeling,—*belongs to the new system*. Such things seldom, if ever, took place under the old law ;—now, it is to be feared that they are far from being of rare occurrence.

A fourth evil, of a very serious description, consists in the shameful manner in which the health of the indigent poor is (nominally) provided for. This feature in the case is also important as betokening

* *Times*, Oct. 20, 1841.

the lowered moral feeling of the "Union," compared with the "Parish." Formerly, when each parish provided itself with a medical officer whose duty it was to attend on the poor, the provision made was generally a fair and proper one; supplying an effective superintendence of the health of the poorer classes, and remunerating the officer employed, in an equitable manner.

But the general practice of the "Unions" presents an entire contrast to the proper feeling before apparent. Both parties,—the poor, and the medical profession,—suffer greatly from the change. Animated by a senseless rage for "economy," derived from the central Board at Somerset House, the Unions have generally adopted the cruel and irrational plan of taking "the lowest tender." How many of the Guardians would like to provide *their own families* with medical attendance after this fashion?

The working of this new system was thus described in a recent debate in the House of Commons:

"In former times the poor man could easily obtain medical assistance when it was needed. If the man was honest, industrious, and deserving, his neighbours were always ready to afford him every assistance, without the necessity of applying to the overseers or guardians of the poor.

The parish doctor was on the spot, and was always willing to give his advice in cases of illness. If these happy days are ever to be restored, the preliminary step must be to restore *parochial* government, but in such a manner as to obviate the abuses which existed under the old system. The present Unions are so large and extensive, that it is quite impossible for the poor to obtain the necessary relief in cases of sickness. Take a single instance:—In the Basford Union, a medical gentleman, who has only recently passed his examination as a medical practitioner, holds two districts, consisting of 12 different parishes, including a population of 12,410 persons (according to the census taken ten years ago, since which it has considerably increased), situate in an agricultural and manufacturing country; the salary which he receives for fulfilling the medical duties in the whole of those two districts being only 87*l.* a year. He resides at Bulwell, and before he reaches three of the parishes—namely, Woodborough (population 717), Lambley (population 690), and Calverton (population 1,064) each of which is seven miles distant from his own residence—he passes, in order to visit his patients, through Arnold, containing 3,572 persons, at a distance of four miles; and in Arnold there resides a legally-qualified medical gentleman, who has

practised there for at least 23 years, a man of excellent conduct, and I believe universally respected. He has a strong objection to the "tender" system, which he has pledged himself never to adopt. He attended, several years previous to the formation of the union, the parishes of Arnold, Calverton, and Woodborough; and applications have since been made to him for a renewal of his services, but the "tender" system forms the objection to his consenting. He held one district in the Union for three years, but finding that the amount of remuneration was inadequate to the duties required of him, he resigned it; and because he would not tender, the district was awarded to an unqualified person; who, after three months' trial, was dismissed for incompetency and neglect of duty. The district is now held by the young man above referred to, who has just commenced practice, and who already holds another district in the same union. The extreme parishes of the two districts are at least 12 miles asunder; so that if a patient living at either of the three parishes requires medical attendance, he has to send seven miles for the medical officer, which will, in urgent cases, require a distance of 14 miles to be travelled, almost daily, and frequently a distance of 28 miles (if two visits be required in a day), before medicines can be ob-

tained, and supplied to the sick person." "It is important that the poor should receive medical relief with the least possible delay. In many cases of accident, such as fractures, wounds, rupture of blood-vessels, or inflammations, delay is fatal. The difference of five minutes often, in such cases, made all the distinctions between life and death."*

So serious a grievance is this, and so vast must be the injury inflicted on the poor by thus stinting them in medical aid, that it may be questioned whether *this one* disadvantage does not more than counterbalance *all* the advantages which may fairly be admitted to have occurred from the new system.

In these four particulars, then, *among others*, for we have scarcely glanced over the subject,—the new law acts prejudicially and injuriously towards *the poor*. But not the poor only have ground of complaint ; for we must consider that

3. It unnecessarily, and therefore unjustifiably, intrenches on the principle of self-government.

This is a point worthy of the consideration of any man aspiring to the character of a Statesman. All who really merit that title will be quite sensible, that it is not merely their duty to *tolerate* the existence of liberty among the people of this country ; but rather, that it should be their pride

* Debate in the House of Commons, Sept. 28, 1841.

and pleasure to *foster* and encourage it. The decay of a spirit of freedom would be inevitably accompanied by a similar decay of all that is noble, or that leads to national greatness or happiness.

Now a main element and preserving cause of the spirit of freedom, is found in the extensive use of plans and systems of *self-government*. A tyranny undertakes to do every thing for the people, save their daily toil. It tells them to mind their plough and their loom ; while it guards their streets, and cleanses their sewers. But a free government knows it to be both right and wise, to give the people as much public business to do, and as much influence and authority in the regulation of their own local government, as it is possible for them conveniently to undertake and to exercise. While everything, therefore, which cannot be *local*, but in which the whole commonwealth must be dealt with and provided for *at once*,—as the Army, the Navy, the Church, the Law,—is undertaken by the Executive Government ; everything which the people can conveniently do for themselves, the watching, lighting, and cleansing their streets,—the selection, in large towns, of their own local authorities, &c. is purposely left to them. This sort of power is left to them on two grounds : 1. That they frequently can regulate these affairs better than some higher authority at

a distance ; and 2. That it is desirable to exercise them, and to give them employment, in public business.

Now of all things which properly belong to the people of a particular locality, the care of their own poor is the last which ought to be taken from them. This is abundantly obvious, from the very nature of the case. The poor cannot be dealt with as sewers or gaols may be. Nothing requires more *personal knowledge*, sympathy, patience, or consideration, than the care of the indigent and distressed. No set of general rules can be laid down, which shall not inevitably be attended with great suffering, and great injustice. Just as reasonably might a physician hand over his whole list of patients, to be prescribed for on some broad, general principles, by a Commission sitting twelve miles off, as a parish expect that their poor can be feelingly and sympathizingly dealt with, by a Board of Guardians, consisting of those who are nine-tenths strangers, and acting under the stern dictation of a central power in the metropolis.

We will describe an actual case, as far as a whole parish was concerned, which has fallen under our own observation.

A town parish, of a reasonable size, having 3,400 inhabitants, was the subject of the change. The care of the poor, as far back as the memory

of the oldest inhabitant could carry him, had always been considered a subject of general interest and concern. Each Easter, as it recurred, two respectable inhabitants were selected at a public meeting of the householders of the parish, and invested, as Overseers, with full power to raise the necessary funds by rate, and to expend them on the indigent and deserving poor. These officers were aided by a permanent Vestry-Clerk, and by a "Poor-Committee" consisting of past Overseers. It was held to be a matter of duty and conscience with them, to become personally acquainted with the cases of those applying for aid. Usually, not only those residing within the parish, but those at a distance also, were individually visited at their lodgings. The number of paupers in the workhouse was generally between 50 and 70, chiefly consisting of aged women. These were bountifully fed, their provisions alone costing the parish 4s. 4d. per head, weekly. On three days in the week they had half a pound of cooked meat to each person; on the other four, *good* soup, pudding and potatoes. Yet, so far from this abundance attracting paupers, it was very rarely indeed that any but the really disabled or decrepid, could be induced to enter the workhouse. The shield of the parish against the impositions of the profligate, was always found to be, an order to go

into the House. "I will give you an order for the House, but no money," was the usual reply of the Overseer, when he had a bad opinion of an applicant; and it was almost always effectual.

But, to the deserving, or those who wished to strive for a living, out-door relief was freely given. As much as 3s. 6d. a week was often allowed to a poor widow, who made out the rest of her living by a little washing or needle-work. In all this, there was no lavish or idle waste of the public funds. All was done on a knowledge of the parties; from a proper feeling of their necessities; and in consonance with the well-known wish of the inhabitants, that their poor should be kindly and liberally treated.

And the poor-rate, on this liberal system, and with 60 or 70 in-door poor, and 200 out-door families requiring relief, was usually about one shilling or eighteen-pence in the pound, per annum; or from *five*, to *seven and a half* per cent, on the actual rent of the houses.

But soon there came a change. By a mandate from Somerset-House, the New Poor Law was introduced. The parishioners were generally averse to it,—no abuse could be pointed out to require such a remedy. For mere uniformity's sake, and because some other parishes might require such a

specific,—the ancient parochial system was abolished, and all that the parishioners were hereafter to know of their own poor, was limited to a general idea that they had been carried off to a large house situate at a considerable distance, and that they, the inhabitants, were in future empowered to appoint two guardians, who would sit at a Board with twenty strangers, and have a slight and insignificant voice in the general management of the Union.

The result has been, that the intercourse which formerly existed, and sympathy which naturally flowed forth, between rich and poor, has been wholly destroyed. If a man or woman is now in distress, he must go,—not to any neighbour,—but to a “relieving officer,” who is a mere machine, indurated by the mass of misery continually passing before him; knowing nothing of the parties, and acting on rigid instructions, which seem to consider pauperism and half-starvation as things which ought to be indissolubly connected. Very soon, except under peculiar circumstances, the poor wretch is immured within four walls, with scarcely the possibility of escape, except it be to encounter utter starvation in the streets. In the old work-house he was frequently visited by various parish officers, who had always an open ear for his complaints. In the “Union” he is scarcely ever seen,

—the “guardians” having no individual power ; and each guardian feeling that he has only a *fractional* interest in the crowds there assembled, among whom he can scarcely discriminate his own parishioners.

With the poor widows, who cannot reconcile themselves to this imprisonment, the case is still worse. Such an one, earning a poor eighteen pence, two shillings, or half a crown, weekly, by her needle, would often receive, if her respectability and worth was fully ascertained, 3*s.* or 3*s.* 6*d.* per week from the old “Poor Committee.” Now she has to appear before the “Union Board,”—the solitary guardian who happens to be present from her own parish “cannot hope to make her case an exception to the general rule,”—and she is ordered, after wasting a whole day in waiting to sue for it, “a shilling a week and a loaf!”

Many of these poor creatures have we seen, since the introduction of the New Poor Law into the district, tottering about the streets, the living pictures of a slow starvation.

“But who hath required all this?” Wherefore should the Legislature thus step in between the inhabitants of a parish and their poor,—without the existence of any previous complaint ; and command that all the poor widows shall be gradually starved to death ;—no one person contributing to

their support, having expressed, or felt, the least desire for any such diabolical economy ?

But even this plea of economy is a false one. It is more than doubtful whether, in the case of well-governed parishes, any permanent saving, on an average of years, will accrue. In the case above described, an old workhouse was given up, at a great sacrifice ; a very large sum expended in enlarging another, to meet the wants of the “ Union ;” several new salaried offices created ; and thus, after a slight reduction for the first year or two, a gradual rise begins, which promises to bring the annual charge quickly up to its former level.

But even were a lasting and considerable reduction to take place, again we ask, why should the Legislature interfere to prevent a parish from merely showing kindness and sympathy to its aged and deserving poor ? Check, if you will, any foolish waste of money which tends to foster pauperism ; but do this by a few simple restorative enactments. In the main, allow the people to regulate these, their own affairs, by their own feelings, and attempt not to insist upon their grinding the faces of the poor, against their own inclination.

These brief and cursory remarks may suffice to indicate the course which we would desire to see taken, in any further legislation on the New Poor

Law. We would not, with many, demand the abolition of the Commission ;—preferring, with Mr. Wakley, to turn it to a good account. Let that Commission continue to exist, but with an entire change in its object and occupation. The member just alluded to, said, in the recent debate, that “ he was not for the total abolition of the law ; for he thought that the interests of the poor were so vast, and that the nation generally was so mixed up with the question of the poor, that it was advisable that a court of appeal should be constituted. To preside at this court he would have a man in whose judgment and humanity he could place implicit reliance ; he would appoint a man who should be designated the “ the Poor Law Judge.” He would also suggest the appointment of a Poor Law advocate, whose duty it should be to support before that tribunal the claims of the poor and distressed. If Her most gracious Majesty had her paid advocates, he did not see why the poor should not have theirs.”

Now to some desirable purpose of this kind, the existing Commission might surely be directed. Up to the present period the Commissioners seem to have mistaken their duties ; and to have thought that the chief end of their creation was, to reduce the Poor-rates, and to protect the pockets of the Rate-payers. But the Rate-payers of England con-

stitute a body of abundant acuteness and abundant power, and they require no aid, nor any suggestion, from a central Board, to induce them to look after their own interests. The continual efforts of the Commissioners, to force the rate-payers, and the Boards of Guardians, into a lower scale of diet and relief for the poor than they were generally willing to adopt, have been rendered necessary, not by any blindness of the rate-payers to their own interests; but by a natural and righteous feeling of their obligations to God, and to their poorer brethren.

Let us, then, ask for a restoration of the old parochial system,—wherever there is *a public* to work the law. Little knots of managers, whether farmers or manufacturers, will always be open to the temptation of “jobbing;” which seems peculiarly to belong to small select committees of self-appointed and self-responsible functionaries. Such compacts ought to be broken up; for out of such no good can possibly arise. But then the other extreme is not at all preferable. The immense parish,—such as Birmingham or Marylebone, in which the recipients of relief will often amount to *thousands*,—is an abuse at least equally deplorable. The rate-payers cannot, in such a district, fitly manage their own affairs, for they cannot meet without constituting a *mob*; and a mob must, of

necessity, mismanage every thing it undertakes. It is the old English parish, that we want,—with its own parson, known by, and knowing, every family within his bounds:—its publicly-chosen overseers, undertaking the care of the poor as a duty to God and to their neighbour: and whose parochial assemblies, of from fifty to an hundred reasonable beings, “inhabitant householders,” knowing and respecting each other,—are too limited to present any field for the demagogue, and too extensive and open for the intrusion of jobbers. We want the people formed into bodies of this sort, wherever practicable;—by *subdivision*, in the large towns; by union of such as are near at hand, in the villages; and being so organized, we want them then to be intrusted with the care of their own poor, and the expenditure of their own money.

The principal remedies required to cure the defects of the former system, were two: 1. A better organization of the people, subdividing large parishes, and uniting small ones; so as to provide, every where, really useful and reasonable bodies of people, into whose hands the care of the poor might safely have been committed; and 2, the means of separation; and of discriminating between the idle and the industrious poor. Every working overseer, a dozen years back, fully felt

the need of some new regulations of this kind. For the construction of such regulations ; and for the trial of many experiments, in the management of the poor,—the existence of some central authority was, and is, clearly desirable.

But no reason can exist, why that central authority should possess the despotic power it now does,—or why it should be permitted to go on, making harsh and cruel laws, which the whole realm abhors. Obtaining, first, large and intelligent bodies of the middle classes, for the management of the poor, the chief authority and responsibility, in all essentials, ought to be left with these assemblies. No Somerset-House Commission should have the power, which is now possessed, of enacting strict and sweeping laws against all kind and liberal treatment. A power to improve or suggest improvements, in matters of detail, does not of necessity include a power to prohibit out-door relief, or the use of a tolerable diet in workhouses. These are matters which may and ought to be left to the providers of the poor-rates ; who, if they choose to give tea and sugar to their old women, and small ale to their aged men, and do not grudge an additional penny in their rates on this account, ought not to be coerced into harsh and cruel measures, by a foreign and uninterested central authority.

We were just closing the present chapter, when the newspaper of the day (Nov. 6.) happened to fall into our hands. On opening it, we found,

1. A report of a public Meeting at Liverpool, called by a requisition subscribed by above 150 of the principal firms in that,—the second town in England. *All parties* had concurred in this manifestation of disgust at the New Poor Law. Eighteen of the guardians of the poor for the town had signed this document; and in that place, divided as it is on all other questions, perfect unanimity prevailed in resolving, “That, after the experience already gained, of the working of the New Poor Law, it is the decided opinion of this meeting, that the system is more cumbrous and expensive than the former parochial system; and is not so efficient or satisfactory either to rich or poor: And that the Churchwardens and Overseers be instructed to apply to Parliament for a local act, for the future administration of the affairs of the poor in this parish.”

2. A report of a public meeting of the town of Woolwich, over which the Rector of the parish presided; and at which it was resolved to apply to the Court of Queen’s Bench to dissolve the Union established by the Poor Law Commissioners, and to leave the people of Woolwich at liberty to manage their own poor.

At this meeting, the Rev. Chairman stated that a principal motive for his interference was, a conviction of the hardships the poor were suffering under the new system. He observed, that the poor of the parish of Woolwich, when in distress, were obliged to attend the board held at Greenwich, a distance of *three miles*, for relief. A journey of three miles and a return of the same distance, was, to the aged, the sick, and the infirm, no small grievance. But when arrived at Greenwich, the mass of applicants was so great, that many of the poor had to wait *from two in the afternoon to nine o'clock at night*; and then would be told that the Guardians were not able to get through the business, and they *must come again that day week!* Now it could not be supposed that they would have come that distance, and waited all those hours, if they had not been in real want. What, then, must be their sufferings before the return of the day of meeting!

Another gentleman stated, that on a very recent occasion, there had been *three hundred and seventy* cases for the weekly meeting of the board; and in consequence, very many of the poor, after waiting from two in the afternoon till past ten at night, were told to return home, a distance of three miles, at nearly midnight; without a morsel of bread, or a bit of firing, and without having even been heard!

Is it to be supposed that a country can possibly be peaceful or happy, in which this is a specimen of the settled administration of the laws ?

3. A third Meeting is reported on the very same day, which took place at Sevenoaks in Kent, to enquire into gross mismanagement said to prevail in the management of the poor in that Union. A nobleman who moved the first Resolution, stated as facts, 1. That on the 22nd of April last, 75 boys were sleeping in 16 beds, and 86 girls in 19 beds. That on the 29th of April it was found that there were 42 boys with enlarged glands ; and 63 girls. That the children were not properly washed from the month of May to the month of November ; in consequence of which the itch generally prevailed. And that on one occasion *five* lying-in women were confined in two beds ; “ not receiving even the ordinary attention which the poor receive in their own cottages.”

Such was the public testimony borne, in the course of *a single day*, to the working of the New Poor Law, by the three different and widely distant towns of Liverpool, Woolwich, and Sevenoaks. All agreed, with the most entire unanimity and earnestness, in reprobating the system, as cruel and oppressive to the poor, and harassing and insulting to the rate-payers. Can it be, that, in the face of such remonstrances as these, coming from

all parts of the kingdom, and from men of all shades of political opinion,—any government will dream of maintaining the present Poor Law ; or any enactment at all resembling it ? Should such an insane attempt be made, it will unquestionably be seen, before many months elapse, that the same folly which has already shipwrecked the Whig administration, will most impartially ruin the prospects of their Conservative successors.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CORN LAWS.

IT would do injustice to the portrait we are endeavouring to sketch, were we to omit a distinct notice of Mr. Sadler's views on so vital a question as that of THE CORN LAWS. In his first considerable publication, his work on Ireland,—he very distinctly and strenuously advocated a full and permanent protection for British Agriculture. But in doing this, he preserved an entire consistency with his general line of argument; by most emphatically declaring, that it was not with a view to the interests of the great proprietors, or even to those of the large agricultural occupiers,—that he took this view; but mainly, and almost exclusively, on the ground of the importance and necessity of such protection, to *the great body of the people*. It is with the most explicit avowal of

this kind, that he thus addresses himself to the consideration of the question :—

“ But this proposition of giving an efficient, not a nominal protection to the agriculture of Ireland, I am anxious to state, *in limine*, is not for the purpose of securing a large national rental. I shall not, however, concede to any modern theorist that this is not an essential advantage :—it has always been regarded as such by all our best writers, even when the reasons for supporting it were not a hundredth part as strong as they are at present. But it is not, I repeat, for the purpose of securing the present rental of a Duke of Devonshire, or an Earl Fitzwilliam, nor yet to serve the interests of the great cultivators ;—it is in behalf of an infinitely more numerous class, whom the arguers on this question generally find it convenient to lose sight of, that the proposition of a continued and efficient protection of Irish agriculture is now urged. It is for the purpose of continuing in work the cottiers ; and of preserving the property of the innumerable little freeholders of Ireland ; who have, most of them, if not all, obtained and purchased their interest in the soil under the operation and guarantee of laws which determined in great measure its value ; laws which, however modified, have for the last century and a half professedly protected agriculture ; a protection which, according to Dalton, (no

mean authority), is even part of "the common law." To abrogate these, then, or render them inefficient, would be to commit as direct a robbery upon such proprietors, as though the legislature were to confiscate their possessions, and deliver them over at once to universal idleness and starvation."

" But in proceeding to consider this part of the subject, it is evident that the interests of the cultivators of Ireland cannot be discussed apart from those of Britain ; nor shall I attempt to do so. They are, as to this question, completely identified ; and it would be no consolation to the Irish labourer thrown out of employ, to learn that the English one was likewise starving ; nor any compensation to the little Irish freeholder to know that the same act which had ruined him, had likewise destroyed the property of the same class throughout the empire. For that such must be the case, at least to a very great extent, and in no long time, is demonstrably plain. The cool proposition of Ricardo, and others of his school, that the poorer lands of the country should go out of cultivation, involves, however worded, loss of employment and destruction of property to multitudes. Such lands confessedly require the most labour ; they are the possessions of the smallest proprietors ; and are, generally speaking, as inferior in quality as they are limited in extent, compared with the

rich abbey-lands and ancient inclosures of the great land-owners. The proposition, then, is one of direct plunder, as it regards tens of thousands of the peasantry of Ireland, and of the yeomanry of England ; whose lands must be abandoned, and their labour at the same time be rendered equally valueless, altering at the same time all the relative values of the country—in order that the stock-jobber's pound-note may pass for thirty shillings ! ” *

He adds, too, this distinct disclaimer of all personal interest in the continuance of protection.

“ One circumstance may render the succeeding defence of British agriculture a matter of some curiosity ; it is urged by one totally unconnected with that interest, and who can say with Cecil—“ I do not dwell in the country ; nor am I acquainted with the plough ; but I think that whosoever doth not maintain the plough, destroys the kingdom.”

He proceeds,

“ The experiment of allowing foreign growers to glut our markets, to the extinction of many of the home ones, has been anciently tried : at first, indeed, it beat down the prices to almost nothing, but afterwards invariably heightened them, and sometimes into actual (not theoretical) famine. But to look to more modern times : In Queen

* *Ireland, its Evils, &c.* p. 320—322.

Elizabeth's days, Lord Bacon informs us, that " it drained much coin of the kingdom, to furnish us with corn from foreign parts ; " and yet what did this importation do for the country ? Its ultimate effect was, by thus discouraging and putting down the home grower, to raise the price of grain so much, that the latter part of her reign was almost a continued dearth. That great man's advice on the occasion was thus expressed : " I may truly say to the English, Go to the pismire, thou slug-gard." In the succeeding reign, notwithstanding there was still not nearly half, if much more than a third, of the present population, this system continued, to the great hindrance of internal industry, and the consequent damage of the public interest. There was still a selfish faction that argued, as at present, in favour of turning the country into a sheep-walk ; asserting, as now, that England could not sustain its people with bread ; or, rather, that it was more profitable to be supplied by others ; and, in spite of such men as More and Bacon and Raleigh, they prevailed. From the former of these I have already quoted at large ; the last, memorializing King James, states, that " corn had in some years cost England two millions sterling ; " and, speaking of such ruinous importations from foreigners, he says, " It is to the dishonour of the land that they should serve this

famous kingdom, WHICH GOD HAS SO ENABLED WITHIN ITSELF." He says, elsewhere, and how truly, succeeding times have shown, that "all nations abound with corn;" hence the interest and duty of each is manifest, to increase the products of the earth as they become necessary, and that by encouraging internal industry instead of superseding it. As to the desideratum of our modern school, he thus expresses himself: "If corn is too cheap, the husbandman is undone, whom we must provide for, FOR HE IS THE STAPLE MAN OF THE KINGDOM?"—an opinion which we have been attempting to prove as true at the present moment, as it was when he uttered it." *

To repeat, however, Mr. Sadler's main arguments, in the terms in which they are given, would be fatiguing to the reader, inasmuch as they have since been adopted by fifty other writers, and presented in as many different forms. It will be preferable, on every account, to endeavour to condense his views, as developed both in his printed works, and in the course of many conversations, in a brief but connected view of the whole controversy. What, then, is the question which at present divides the whole British community?

On the one side we see the Agricultural interest, —landed proprietors, farmers, and all connected

* *Ireland, its Evils, &c.* p. 346, 347.

with them,—earnestly intreating the continuance of the existing system, which provides, that until the rise of price denotes a short supply at home, no foreign-grown corn shall come into England.

On the other, the greater part of the manufacturers, with many of the mercantile and trading classes, treat the sustaining operation of this rule, keeping the price of corn generally from 25 to 40 per cent above the continental average,—as a positive grievance. They claim it as an innate right, to be permitted to buy the necessaries of life at the cheapest market. They also assert, that our exclusion of foreign corn leads foreigners to exclude our manufactures: and that thus they are deprived of various and extensive markets.

Now, how is this controversy to be satisfactorily determined?

Obviously, there is no great difficulty in repelling most of the assumptions of the complaining party. It is difficult to conceive of a case resting on data more uncertain or unsound. Every one of the facts on which it relies, may be safely and resolutely questioned.

That corn is cheaper in Poland than in England, is true of the present moment. But of course every one must reckon on an immediate equalization, as the natural result of the opening the English market to the foreign corn-grower. The

price of Polish or Prussian corn would rise to the level of the English market, *minus* the cost of conveyance: the price of British corn would fall to the level of Hamburgh, *plus* the charges for freight, &c. *

The competition, then, would necessarily render it unprofitable to grow corn in England, except on lands naturally productive and adjacent to a good market. All moderate men, on whatever side, agree, that the tendency of the change must be, to throw much land in these islands out of cultivation; or at least to reduce it to pasture, which employs a far smaller amount of labour. The result then, is, that because the Polish land-owner, tilling his land by serfs, can send corn to market at a lower rate than the British farmer, who pays rent, and high rates and taxes, and from 9s. to 14s. a week to his labourers,—we are to “buy where we can buy cheapest,” and let our land go out of cultivation, and our labourers flock into the workhouse, or beg on the highway.

But here comes in the rejoinder of the free traders. “Only give us liberty to buy corn from other nations, and those nations will buy our manufactures from us, and thus a new source of

* It is needless to embarrass the question by introducing the medium plan of a fixed duty; inasmuch as that plan is now repudiated by *both* the two great contending parties.

employment will spring up, which will absorb and set to work, all the agricultural labourers whom you expect to cast loose."

When, however, we call for evidence in support of this assumption, nothing of the least validity is forthcoming. We see foreign nations earnestly giving protection to their own manufactures; and constantly exhibiting their anxiety to foster every branch of native industry; and we ask, on what ground the expectation rests, that they will abandon this their favourite system, merely because England consents to admit their corn? Often has this enquiry been made; but never has it been satisfactorily answered. We conclude, therefore, that it is the dictate of the merest common sense to stop short at this point; and to say, 'Before we can even think of sacrificing one branch of British industry to promote another, you must shew us, clearly and satisfactorily, that *that* other branch *will be* benefitted; and that there is some disposition, at least, to reciprocate concessions of this kind, among foreign powers.'

This may be called the present state of the question. There is, however, a higher and more permanent view, which the statesman ought fixedly to adopt; and by which, as by a first principle, all his reasonings and movements on this great question, ought to be regulated.

“The greatest happiness of the greatest number,” we have already stated to have been the object of Mr. Sadler’s settled aim ; and the very phrase itself to have been adopted by him, long before he had been made aware of its use in other quarters. Following this principle to its results, we would endeavour to imagine a statesman, forgetting the rich and wealthy individuals, whether land-owners or manufacturers, who may be enabled by their position to address their arguments to his own personal ear ; and thinking almost solely of the multitude ;—of the myriads whose very existence may depend on the course of policy he adopts.

The permanent principles on which alone a state can satisfactorily proceed, must be identical with those on which it ought to be originally based. Let us set aside, then, for a moment, all the temporary circumstances which now distract the view, and let us contemplate the foundation of a new state, on territories so advantageously circumstanced as to enable a free choice to be made.

Let us imagine a formerly populous, but now deserted province, on the shores of the Mediterranean, as chosen to be the birthplace of such new commonwealth. Give scope and room enough for the experiment ; land of an average quality ; sea-coast and ports to a convenient extent ; and people ready to congregate from other parts of Europe to occupy it.

And what would be the *first* object (economically speaking,) of a really wise contriver of the whole design? Can there be a doubt that the leading aim of a really prudent man would be, to get the whole territory under *cultivation* as fast as possible; and especially to promote the growth of corn, so as to render the staff of life naturally, and not artificially, abundant among the people?

Every possible consideration, possessing the least weight, would lead him to this conclusion. The obvious insecurity of the state, while depending for its very food upon foreign supplies, would naturally press upon his mind. The healthy character of agricultural occupation, both for mind and body; and its safety, as insuring an unfailing return to those who devote themselves to it, would all tend to the same conclusion.

Imagine, then, an advocate of the manufacturing interest, rising in council to oppose these views. ‘You are wrong,’ he would argue, ‘to devote so much attention to the mere culture of the soil. Nothing is more common, nothing more universal, than the growth of food. You may have supplies from every part of the world whenever you need them. Agriculture neither offers scope for ingenuity or enterprise; nor will it give employment to the myriads who will flock to your new settlement. Leave, then, these matters to shift

for themselves, and turn your attention to the founding a great manufacturing and commercial emporium.'

'I dare not,' would be the reply of a prudent legislator,—'I dare not venture on so hazardous an experiment. Let me but plant the people, village by village, and farm by farm, over the whole face of the country ; so that every man may raise his own subsistence and something more ; and general plenty and social prosperity must be the result. Then will manufactures spring up, as comfort grows and increases, and luxury begins to find an entrance : but let the factory only rear itself when a sufficiency of food has already been provided for the subsistence of those who labour therein. A course like this is encompassed by no hazards ; everything naturally follows in its order, and no opening is left for any violent dislocation of the social system. But would this be the case on the opposite plan ? Were we to raise factories and mills, and fill them with our people, leaving the land untilled, and relying on supplies from other countries, how obvious would be the risk of frequent calamity and convulsion ! Two concerns of vital moment would be left open to frequent disappointment :—1. Our produce would chiefly consist of manufactured goods, which must be sold to buy food, or the work-people would starve. 2.

Sufficient supplies of corn must always be attainable, or a famine might ensue. Thus, either by a glut of goods in the market, or by a preference given by foreigners to the products of some other country, the whole reliance of the people for subsistence might suddenly fail. Or, in the second case, a shortness of the harvests throughout Europe might induce a closing of the ports by several or by all the sovereigns ; and thus a positive impossibility of procuring food, might for a season take place. Hence nothing can be more clear, than that any ruler who desires to banish anxiety of mind, must adopt the obvious course, of leading the people to supply themselves, *first*, with the necessaries of life, and then, and only then, to complete their system by the addition of manufactures.'

We doubt whether any, even the most ardent advocate of the commercial interests, will deny this proposition ; but we can easily imagine that some might be inclined to limit it to the case of a new state. Such an one would reply, that in a country like our own, already fully cultivated, and in many parts over-peopled, a totally different policy ought to be adopted. Admitting, he would say, that in the first instance the people ought to be spread over the country, and the cultivation of the land encouraged ; still, a time must be expected

to arrive, when all the really fertile land would be occupied ; when the people would continue to increase ; and when it would plainly become an imperative duty, to seek for new means of employing and sustaining them.

We are prepared to withstand this argument without any reserve, and to deny it the least validity. We contend, that the governing principle of a statesman can no more change, in this matter, than it can become either right, or wise, in a private individual, to modify his adherence to truth, or justice, or humanity. The course of policy we are advocating is not one belonging only to a certain arrangement of circumstances ; or which can become less wise or necessary by the lapse of time or the increase of population. Its truth is as obvious, and as indisputable, when there are five hundred people on every square mile, as when there are only *five*.

Many persons, it is true, are perpetually seen snatching up the bare fact, that “ population has increased,” and rushing at once to the conclusion, that we must now mainly rely upon manufactures ; for that the people have become too numerous to be supported out of the land. This is only one among many instances in politics, in which a something is put forward in lieu of an argument, and eagerly adopted by the unthinking, without at

all stopping to enquire whether the new allegation is of the least use in proving that which it is supposed to establish.

In what way is it, that the increase of population is supposed to make it manifest, that we must leave off thinking so much of agriculture, and place all our reliance on manufactures? To our view, the necessity would appear to lay in a totally opposite direction.

Does the increased amount of our population, and the consequent difficulty of providing sufficient food, render it more prudent than before to neglect our native supply of provisions; which, to whatever extent it may reach, must always be in our own power;—and to lean in an increased degree upon the casual and uncertain supplies we may get from abroad; which supplies may, at any moment, be suddenly diminished, or wholly withheld, by the edict of an absolute monarch, or a warlike freak of our transatlantic rivals?

Or does the growing density of the masses already congregated in our large towns, and which fill every thoughtful mind with anxiety, lead us to desire to drive thousands and tens of thousands of our present agriculturists into those dangerous hives; to lower wages, to increase the bitterness of the existing distress, and to render it still more doubtful whether such masses can much longer be kept in any state of subordination?

Or do the obvious dangers, already existing, of utter starvation to myriads,—either from sudden panics, improvements in machinery, or other causes; which, at a stroke, reduce multitudes to hopeless misery, and bring the state into urgent difficulty,—do these appalling perils offer much inducement to us to increase the numbers of those who are thus hazardously circumstanced? On the contrary, do not all these circumstances throw their weight into the opposite scale, and warrant us in considering the growth of population as an argument *for*, and not *against*, an increased and more sedulous protection to agriculture?

For our part, when we hear, as we are now perpetually doing,—of new automaton-machinery, which promises in a few months to throw out of employment *all the cotton-spinners* in Lancashire;—of discoveries in metal-working, which must quickly supersede manual labour in great branches of that class of manufactures; and of applications of galvanism to engraving and its kindred arts, which must dismiss other thousands,—we exclaim, as such tidings flow in, each, like Job's messengers, more fearful than the last,—“Well, the comfort is, that the *spade* still remains! *That*, at least, is a resource which will never fail us; and which is equal to every emergency.”

Who can traverse this beautiful island, and see

millions after millions of available acres laying wholly idle ; * while on that which is *said to be* cultivated, you may frequently pass over miles without coming to a single cottage ;—and remember that nearly every plot of five acres is equal to the maintenance of a peasant, with his wife and children ;—without feeling his wrath burn within him at the profane and wicked usurpation of the men, who, while they themselves wallow in luxury, talk to us of “ the evil of a surplus population ! ” There would be little difficulty in pointing out mill-owners, the very names of whose grandfathers are unknown, (if, indeed, they ever had any) and who have amassed by the agonies and early deaths of myriads of little children, wealth enough to purchase an earl’s domains ; and who now cry out, “ It is idle to think that agriculture can employ this immense population ! ”—whereas, they might, if they pleased, settle happily and in comfort, on *one* of their estates, the

* Mr. Porter, in his *Progress of the Nation*, v. 1. p. 177,—calculates these to be as follows ;—

“ Wastes capable of improvement.”

England	-	-	-	3,454,000	acres
Wales	-	-	-	530,000	“
Scotland	-	-	-	5,950,000	“
Ireland	-	-	-	4,900,000	“
Brit. Islands	-	-	-	166,000	“
				<hr/>	
				15,000,000	“

whole unemployed population of Bolton or Stockport! But no,—such a thought never enters their minds!

But we must return to the argument. We assert, then, that the man who, in settling a new colony, or organizing a new state, did not direct his main efforts to bring the land into cultivation,—did not strive to the utmost to promote the growth of sufficient food for the people,—would be regarded by all rational men, as blind to his foremost and most urgent duty. We cannot doubt that the theorist, who, in such a position, contrived the employment of the population in factories; leaving their very existence dependent on their being able, first, to *sell* their goods, and secondly, to *buy* food, instead of raising it for themselves, around their dwellings,—we cannot doubt, we say, that such a speculator would be universally condemned, as incurring great and needless perils.

But that it is safer to venture on such an experiment with five-and-twenty millions of people, than it would be with five-and-twenty thousand; is a supposition about as rational as it would be, to deprecate trifling with squibs, but to be utterly heedless over a barrel of gunpowder. A mistake in Canada or New Zealand may be retrievable; but what would the man deserve who could in-

cautiously experimentalize on the supply of food for the whole population of Great Britain ?

These speculators are very ready to assert, that England cannot grow her own food. That this is utterly untrue, in years of average fruitfulness, is sufficiently proved by the fact, that in the course of three years, 1833, 1834, and 1835, only 175,480 quarters of foreign wheat found a market among us. The failure or partial failure of an harvest naturally produces a need for a foreign supply; and this supply we have hitherto found attainable at a moderate advance of price. Still, a bad harvest, and consequent rise of price, always have been, and always must be, calamitous to the extent to which they reach. But what shall we say to the men, who, on the fact that in bad years our home supply is insufficient, would found a proposition which must give us a short supply every year, and make the calamitous necessity of importation a thing of constant occurrence !

Yet such must be the result of what is called a "free trade in corn." The opening of the ports, at all times, to Polish corn, must, it is universally admitted, discourage the British farmer, and throw much corn-land out of cultivation. The home supply would thus be continually and permanently lessened ; and our supply of food, and the price of that supply, would grow, year by year, more

contingent on the pleasure and convenience of foreign powers. That America can send us any considerable quantity, at a low price, is clearly out of the question. Hence, when once we came to depend upon a Polish or Prussian supply, as a necessary feature in our system, it must be obvious that a war with Russia or with France would inevitably double the price of bread in England, and plunge our working population into the deepest suffering.

This, however, is but one branch of the subject ; and not the most important branch. The grand and governing fact of the whole question is, that the main destiny and settled employment of man was fixed, nearly six thousand years since, by an All-wise and All-beneficent hand. “The LORD “God sent him forth, *to till the ground* from whence “he was taken.”

There is nothing trifling or unmeaning in the words of Scripture. We do not strain this passage beyond its legitimate intent, when we maintain, that we here find described, *that* employment and aim, which Wisdom itself has marked out for the great bulk of the human race, as the fittest, happiest, and best.

Obviously, an expression like this is not to be carried to an absurd length, or strained into a positive enactment. No rational man would

argue from it that artificers are rebels against the Divine design ; but without thus exaggerating the intent of the passage, we may reasonably draw from it the fair and moderate conclusion ; that the business and occupation thus assigned to the first human family, must be, and ought to be, the foremost and most indispensable in all those gathered and congregated families now called nations. In every such society the first economical object ought to be, the tilling of the ground. In that occupation there will ever be found, both full employment for all the people ; and abundant provision for all their wants. It is at once the most necessary, the most salutary, and the most peaceful. The best proof of this is found in the fact, that the more this branch of industry is promoted, the more will the earth be brought into resemblance to that Paradise which commenced the world's history ; and to that " holy city " which will close it. In the most thickly-peopled spots on our globe, such as Lucca, Belgium, and some parts of Switzerland, the common description of the country is, that " it resembles a garden." If we could scatter our own five-and-twenty millions over the land of these three kingdoms, so that each family should have its five or ten acres, the result would be, an orderly and happy population, and the land " resembling a garden."

And such a state would approach the nearest to the Paradisaical bliss. Before sin or sorrow entered the world, “the LORD GOD planted *a garden* eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed.” This was man’s original state of happiness. It will never return until we again behold “the Paradise of God.” (Rev. ii. 7.) Meantime, while we readily admit, that mere external circumstances or occupations cannot remove or remedy the great Upas-tree of human life, innate corruption ;—still it can neither be unreasonable nor harmful to keep these things in mind ; and to remember, that God’s intent was, that man should “till the ground ;” and that the more thoroughly and carefully this is done, the nearer do we approach, *in that one particular*, the original Paradise, in which man was both innocent and happy.

Our conclusions, then, from the whole investigation, are to the following effect :—

That merely to remove our custom from the English corn-grower to the Polish one,—thereby throwing labourers out of employment at home, and giving their wages to foreigners,—would be doing nothing else than evil :—

That the supposition, that, in return, the Russians and Germans would leave off protecting or preferring their own manufactures,—and would

open their markets to our goods,—is, at present, altogether destitute of proof; and, in itself, very improbable:—

That legislation based on such a mere assumption, would be a near approach to lunacy:—

That in all countries, the first and indispensable object, in economy, with the statesman, should be, the inducing a home cultivation of a sufficient amount of food:—

That, remembering the absence of importation into England in years of average fruitfulness, and looking at the 15,000,000 of acres still uncultivated, the possibility of an abundant home-supply for a far larger population than England at present possesses, is evident and indisputable:—and

That a preference for agricultural pursuits is inculcated, alike by the lessons of experience, and by the recorded intentions of HIM who formed man, and who “knew what was in man.”

Finally, to repeat the wise adage already quoted, let us support the plough, for “he who does not maintain the Plough, destroys the kingdom.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CURRENCY.

WE pursue our task, of giving an outline, however rapid and imperfect, of Mr. Sadler's views on all the great questions of the day ; because we feel that a wrong would be done to his memory, were he regarded as a "man of one idea," or as if absorbed by his researches into the Law of Human Increase. Those who enjoyed the happiness of his acquaintance, were constantly surprised and delighted by the richness and variety of his mental stores ; and by the evidence he was constantly giving, in the passing conversations of the day, of his intimate acquaintance with the true bearings of almost every question which could come under a statesman's consideration.

One of the foremost and most important of these topics, was that of the CURRENCY. And it was

assuredly one mark of the sagacity of Mr. Sadler's mind; that he constantly assigned to this question the very first rank in the scale of state-necessities. It is this circumstance which has mainly influenced us in especially alluding to this topic. Sufficient is it, alone, to establish one claim on behalf of Mr. Sadler, to the rank of a statesman, to observe, that while many men of talent and celebrity (such as Mr. Canning and Lord Liverpool,) were content to leave the monetary system in all its mingled follies and absurdities; merely patching up the shapeless and crazy machine, as sheer necessity might compel;—he ever regarded it with a wiser and more reasonable appreciation; and held the subject to be one on which no government had ever yet either fully understood, or adequately discharged, its true and weighty responsibilities.

In truth, the history of the monetary system of England, if carefully and graphically sketched, would present a picture which must recal to every reader's mind the exclamation, "See with how little wisdom the world is governed!" Throughout the whole narrative, it would constantly be observed, that the prevalent feeling with *actual* legislators and *supposed* statesmen had ever been, that the governance and regulation of the money of the country, was a matter concerning

which they either could not, or need not, give themselves any concern !

Confining our attention mainly to our own times,—to the last twenty or thirty years,—this has been most clearly and manifestly the case. Throughout the various discussions of 1819, 1823, 1826, and the allusions to the question which have since occurred, we may search in vain for any just or accurate appreciation of the real magnitude of the subject. Scarcely ever does it seem to have entered into any of the debaters' heads,—that in calmly enacting, for instance, a reduction of the currency, according to some fancy of the bullion-philosophers,—they were, in practical effect, resolving, that so many thousands of merchants, traders, and manufacturers should be ruined ; so many hundreds die of broken hearts ; and so many tens of thousands of the labourers, of slow starvation and lingering disease. Such is the state of things at the instant at which these lines are written ; and the cause of all this ruin and misery is as palpable and unquestionable as the existence of daylight ; in the plain fact, that the country is now suffering the wretchedness of a more contracted currency than it has known for probably fifty years. And the most extraordinary feature in the whole business is, that while our legislators seem to feel it incumbent upon them to regulate by statute

almost every other circumstance affecting the being or well-being of the people; *this*, the chief and governing point of all, is constantly left, by consent of all parties, to hap-hazard !

As an illustration, it is strictly true to assert, that just as the rise of the thermometer denotes the spread of a genial warmth over nature, causing fruitfulness in all places within its influence; while the fall of the mercury shews the approach of chilling frost, binding up all nature in icy chains;—so does a rise of the currency constantly betoken activity and prosperity; and a diminution, stagnation and distress. The practical view, however, is generally the best. As a plain matter of fact, then, but one which is constantly forgotten or overlooked,—let it be observed, that every increase of the quantity of money afloat immediately produces a rise in the value and price of all commodities. This rise offers to all traders a new profit. It thus instantly tempts to speculation; and leads to hope and to confidence. Orders are freely given for all goods which shew a tendency to rise in value. Trade forthwith becomes brisk; and a career of what is called “prosperity,” is immediately commenced. Just as certain, as general, and as immediate, is the effect of a diminution of the currency. A fall in the value of goods is the instant and inevit-

able result. Losses are thus inflicted on all who hold goods ; or who are in the act of importing or receiving commodities. Alarm is excited : no one knows how far the decline may go. Trade is instantly paralyzed, for no one will buy more than a few weeks' or days' consumption. Workshops stand still ; the masters are perplexed to meet their engagements ; the men are discharged ; and pauperism and misery increase on every side.

If we could properly understand and appreciate the extent and power of the operation of the Currency on all the affairs of life, we should feel the vast importance of making two points quite secure ; — 1. the *sufficiency* of the circulating medium ; and, 2, the *steadiness* of its supply.

The misery caused by a deficient *quantity* may perhaps be in some measure understood, by merely watching the various sufferings of a dozen traders, all cramped by shortness of capital. The wretchedness of their state is sure to destroy the health, if not the reason, of some of them. Now, to a certain extent, this sort of misery is inflicted on the whole trading portion of the community, and on all connected with them, whenever the Currency is reduced and kept below its proper level. Not the insolvent only, or the heedless, are the sufferers ; but the difficulty of obtaining payments which are fully due, and the still greater difficulty in mak-

ing sales with safety, inflict both loss and anxiety upon the most solid and prudent.

Still greater, however, is the injury inflicted, and the ruin inevitably caused, by rapid enlargements and sudden contractions of the Currency. These often bring absolute ruin on the most innocent, and the most free from speculative excesses. Take a recent and a well-known instance. A merchant succeeds his father in business, and in a solid capital of £100,000. When he comes into the possession and management of both, he finds the cotton-market, in which his business chiefly lies, in an apparently healthy and buoyant state. Who is to warn this young man, that much of this apparently fair appearance, is owing to the operations of the Lancashire Joint-Stock-Banks? He cannot calculate their effect; nor tell how soon they may find it necessary to change their course. He imports, as his father had done, large quantities of cotton. The Banks begin to be perplexed; and to withdraw their advances. Cotton immediately falls in price. He does not like to sell at a loss of 10s. per bag. He therefore holds on. Meantime fresh consignments come; and, hoping for better times, he accepts for the amount of their invoices. His stock increases; but now the price is still lower; and he cannot bear to lose 20s. per bag on 15,000 bags. Still, therefore, he maintains his ground,

more reluctant to sell, as, week by week, the price gives way. At last, he is brought to a standstill; and finds, on winding up his affairs, that he has more than 30,000 bags of cotton, on each of which he is a loser of £3,—and, finally, that he is a beggar! The plain and indisputable cause of the whole, being, that certain makers of paper-money had raised the price of cotton, in 1837 and 1838, by their large and free issues; and that when they were compelled to withdraw those issues, cotton necessarily fell; and thus his whole fortune, like the fortunes of scores and hundreds of others, has been sacrificed by these juggles of the paper-money dealers; *the legislature standing by*, all the while, and seeing the people thus practised upon!

Bearing these things in mind, then, and observing, from thence, how vastly important it must be, to keep the Currency as far as possible in a fixed and tranquil state; neither encouraging rash speculations by large and sudden augmentations of the circulating medium; nor plunging the country into wretchedness, by rapid and painful contractions;—observing, we say, these things, let us take a glance at what has been the actual state of our circulating medium, in this country, during the last five and twenty years.

First, let us set down the Paper Currency of

England and Wales, yearly, from 1814 to 1841.

Year	Bank of England	Country Banks	Total
1814	26,901,000	22,709,000	49,610,000
1815	26,886,000	19,011,000	45,897,000
1816	26,574,000	15,096,000	41,670,000
1817	28,274,000	15,894,000	44,168,000
1818	27,220,000	20,507,000	47,727,000
1819	25,657,600	15,701,338	41,358,948
1820	24,553,160	10,576,245	35,129,405
1821	20,443,320	8,256,180	28,699,500
1822	18,326,430	8,416,830	26,743,260
1823	19,582,348	9,920,074	29,502,422
1824	20,293,326	12,831,332	33,124,658
1825	19,290,570	14,930,168	34,220,738
1826	22,255,222	8,656,101	30,911,323
1827	21,512,491	9,985,300	31,497,791
1828	21,078,327	10,121,476	31,199,803
1829	19,640,000	8,130,327	27,770,327
1830	20,494,850	7,600,000 *	28,094,850
1831	19,070,824	7,300,000 *	26,370,824
1832 †	17,605,720		
1833	18,829,750	10,152,104	28,981,854
1834 ‡	19,126,000	10,154,112	29,280,112
1835	18,240,000	10,420,623	28,660,623
1836	18,147,000	11,733,945	29,880,945
1837	18,716,000	10,142,049	28,858,049
1838	19,359,000	11,364,962	30,723,962
1839	17,612,000	11,084,970	28,696,970
1840	17,231,000	9,981,286	27,212,286
1841	17,481,000	9,080,077	26,561,377
„ Dec.	16,292,000	8,936,023	25,223,023

* Marshall's Tables, p. 63.

† We find no returns of the Country-Bank issues of this year.

‡ The returns from 1834 to 1841 are all of the October quarter.

We find then, between the years 1840 and 1841, the enormous reduction of *twenty-three millions* of paper-currency. The main fact to counterbalance this, is, the extensive coinage and issues of gold which have taken place in the intervening years. These have been as follows ;—

1817	£4,275,337
1818	2,862,337
1819	3,574
	<hr/>
	£7,141,284
	<hr/>

We draw a line here, because it is matter of record that in the latter year, 1819, the value of the sovereign was admitted in acts of parliament to be *above* 20s. Of course in such a state of things, this gold currency could not remain afloat ; and it is quite certain that the bulk of it was either clandestinely exported, or melted down by jewellers and other artists at home. But a very small portion of this, then, ought to come into our present calculation. We proceed,—

	£
1820	949,516
1821	9,520,728
1822	5,356,787
1823	759,748
1824	4,065,075
1825	4,580,919
1826	5,896,461
1827	2,512,636

	£
1828	1,008,559
1829	2,446,754
1830	2,387.881
1831	587,949
1832	3,730,757
1833	1,225,269
1834	66,949
1835	1,109,718
1836	1,787,782
1837	1,253,088
1838	3,376,569
1839	
1840	

£52,623,175

Now if we could suppose for a moment that this large sum, or even the half, or the third part of it, were afloat, the argument would be at an end. A certain amount of paper-money would have been called in, and a like value in gold substituted for it, and that would be all. But it is perfectly certain that this is very far indeed from being the case. During the last twenty years, it has happened at least four or five times, that the market price of gold became so high, that the value of the sovereign, at Paris and Hamburgh, was more than 20s ; and continued so for a considerable period. Whenever this occurred, nothing could possibly prevent a flow of gold from England to those places where the sovereign thus bore a premium. In

the last two years this has been especially the case, from a failure of the harvests. No one doubts that several millions of gold have been transmitted in payment for corn. Besides all this, there is the constant drain of the currency, by the melting-down which takes place at home ; for, very frequently, the sovereign is, to the working goldsmith, the best material he can throw into the melting-pot. A further abstraction takes place, in the little bags of coin which are continually passing out of England ; both to the continent, by travellers ; and to our immense colonial possessions, by the swarms of emigrants which weekly leave our shores. In these various methods, no one can hesitate to admit the probability, that, in these twenty years, at least two-thirds of the whole amount coined must have been abstracted. This would leave about seventeen millions as a real addition to the circulating medium.

But there is another large deduction. In the days when bank-notes were a legal tender, no one, whether banker or trader, had the least necessity to retain by him any quantity of gold. Now, however, the case is quite altered. The Bank of England strives to keep eight or ten millions of gold shut up in its coffers ; at the present moment it has nearly six millions. Every private or joint-stock bank in the three kingdoms must also keep

its own stock of gold. Add to these amounts, the hoards of individual misers ; and the stocks of the bullion-merchants ; and it becomes clear that an estimate of ten millions thus employed, and therefore *not in circulation*, is a very moderate one.

Our final conclusion, then, is, that, with the £25,200,000 of paper, at this moment, (Dec. 1841) in circulation,—there may be from eight to ten millions of gold ; making, together, *less than thirty-six* millions—probably, less than *thirty-four*. But even so recently as in 1818, the paper currency *alone* amounted to nearly *forty-eight* millions ; exceeding our present circulation, of gold and paper combined, by about one-fourth !

This, however, is only a partial view of the case. The nation has been prodigiously augmented since that period. Its population has increased, and its trade has still more rapidly grown and enlarged itself. The population of England and Wales in 1814 was under eleven millions ;—in 1841 nearly sixteen millions. In 1814 our exports were fifty-three millions ; our imports thirty-three. In 1840 our exports had risen to one hundred and sixteen millions ; and our imports to sixty-seven millions. Let us place these figures side by side, and at once the wretched inadequacy of our present currency will strike every mind.

	1814.	1840—1.
Population*	10,700,000	15,911,725
Exports	£53,573,234	£116,479,678
Imports	33,755,263	67,432,964
Currency	49,610,000	37,000,000 !

One circumstance, then, to which Mr. Sadler often adverted, and with which his mind was deeply impressed, was that of the *insufficiency* of the existing monetary system.

But there was a second point, to which he frequently called attention ;—namely, the prodigious evils caused by the uncertainties and fluctuations of the present system, or rather, *want of system* ;—the hap-hazard way of dealing with the question, which has for so many years prevailed.

In order to be generally understood, we will briefly exhibit the ebbs and flows of the last five-and-twenty years ; together with the effects of these high and low tides on commercial affairs.

Year	Bank Paper	Effects
1816	£41,670,000	Distress.
1817	44,168,000	
1818	47,727,000	Prosperity.
1819	41,358,948	Distress.
1820	35,129,405	
1821	28,699,500	} Great Distress ; County Meetings calling for relief.
1822	26,743,260	

* We include England and Wales only, because, in giving the currency, we can only specify the English and Welsh circulation.

Year	Bank Paper	Effects
1823	29,502,422	
1824	33,124,658	{ Great prosperity and speculation
1825	34,220,738	
1826	30,911,323	
1827	31,497,791	
1828	31,199,803	
1829	27,770,327	{ Great distress; burn- ings, and meetings to petition
1830	28,094,850	
1831	26,370,824	
1832		
1833	28,981,854	
1834	29,280,112	{ Return of prosperity.
1835	28,660,623	
1836	29,880,945	
1837	28,858,049	
1838	30,723,962	
1839	28,696,970	
1840	27,212,286	
1841	26,561,077 to 25,223,023	{ Distress and com- plaining.

These figures cannot adequately exhibit the whole of the facts. They do, however, direct our attention to these obvious points :—

That in 1822, the paper-currency having fallen below twenty-seven millions, such distress was felt, that about one half of the counties in England met to call for relief; and at some of these meetings, propositions for a compromise with the national creditor were received with favor :

Yielding to this pressure, Parliament passed the small note-Bill ; thus again returning to the paper-

system. The bank-note currency soon rose to thirty-three and thirty-four millions ; (1824-5) and vast “prosperity” instantly appeared :

In 1825 this produced the usual result of “a panic.” Parliament once more determined to restrict the paper-currency ; and the small notes were again ordered to cease, from April, 1829 :

This return to restriction immediately operated, and in 1829, 1830, and 1831, the currency fell to twenty-seven and twenty-six millions, and severe distress was again felt. The commencement of this distress was the main cause which drove the Ministry of 1830 from office, and produced the Reform-Bill.

Shortly after, the new Joint-Stock-Banks began to work another enlargement of the currency. In 1832 the issues of these Banks had not reached one million sterling ;—in 1835 they amounted to *four* millions. Hence, in the course of 1835 and 1836, the whole paper-currency afloat repeatedly exceeded *thirty millions* ; while at the moment at which these lines are written, it is scarcely *twenty-five* !

Doubtless, to some persons the question will instantly occur,—Can the mere addition or abstraction of three or four millions to or from the paper-money afloat, work all the difference which is visible, between the prosperity of 1836, and the deep distress of 1841 ?

We answer,—most undoubtedly it can,—and the question merely betrays a want of reflection and of observation. For the fact is, that the diminution or increase of the currency is not to be considered as a diminution or increase *of the whole*, to the mere extent of perhaps a sixth or an eighth; but as a reduction of *a certain part* of the circulating medium, to the fearful extent of probably one fourth or one third !

Is it not obvious, to any one who gives the least reflection to the subject,—that there are certain large classes of the community which are wholly unaffected by either the increase or the diminution of the circulating medium. The entire mass of annuitants, whether deriving their incomes from the national debt, the army, or the navy, or from property invested in bonds and mortgages of various descriptions; the judges, and the leading members of the legal profession; the clergy, and several other large classes of the community;—all these may *hear* of a scarcity of money, or of a glut, but they feel it not, or so slightly as to be scarcely worth the mention. Each half-year sees its fourteen millions of money paid from the Bank to the fundholders; and whether money be scarce, or plentiful, the amount which they receive is precisely the same.

In like manner another very large class,—called

“the landed interest,” may be, and at this moment is, very little affected by the diminution of the currency. Prices are just now at a remunerating level for the farmer. He sells his produce at a fair price ; and pays his rent with punctuality. Neither he, therefore, nor his landlord, feel anything, of the depression which at this moment pervades the “commercial interests.” Again,—ask such establishments as Mess. Hoares, in Fleet Street, or Mess. Coutts or Herries, in Westminster, what they know of “commercial distress,” and they will reply, “Just what we read in the newspapers.” In such circles as these, everything proceeds just as it would if the issues of the Bank of England were five or six millions larger than they now are. It matters nothing to them whether money be scarce or plentiful ; their stock of gold or of bank-notes remains the same, whatever be the “pressure” or the “buoyancy” felt in “the money-market.” In all such quarters, whether we turn to the noble, of fifty or an hundred thousand a year ; or to the retired holder of consols ; or to the judge, or the general, or the bishop, whose income is always the same ; or to the banker or agent who “never speculates,”—in all these classes there *is* no depression, there *is* no excess ; *their* share of the currency is at all times nearly the same. Hence it follows, that when we observe a difference of

five millions,—as will be found between the paper afloat in Oct. 1838, and that in Dec. 1841—we may be sure that this five millions is deducted, not from the *whole* paper-currency, but from *that* portion of the bank-note circulation which is usually employed in trade and commerce. If we conclude that half of the £30,723,962 which was afloat in October 1838, was employed in trade, then we may safely calculate that, as there is only £25,223,023 afloat in December 1841, the whole, or nearly the whole, of this reduction of five millions, has been drawn from *that* portion of the currency which was employed in commercial transactions; and that in lieu of £15,000,000 so employed in 1838, there is only £10,000,000 now.

And is not this a startling fact? Can we be surprised to find a sudden paralysis seizing on every branch of trading, commercial, or manufacturing industry? Is not such an affliction fully accounted for? Need we turn, as some are idiotically doing, to the Corn Laws for a solution of our present difficulties; trying to make it appear consistent and rational, that the same Corn Laws which co-existed with “great prosperity” in 1835 and 1836, should yet be the sole cause of great distress in 1841! Does not common sense shew us, at a single glance, that a system of prohibition of foreign corn which has lasted, in various forms,

for five-and-twenty years, and has not prevented the occurrence in that time of several periods of great prosperity, can never be the cause of the depression we now see. On the other hand, nothing can be plainer, nothing more indisputable, than the fact, that whenever we have a full and overflowing circulating medium, then trade and manufactures flourish; while, on the other hand, whenever a reduction of the currency takes place, a depression fully answerable is instantly felt throughout all our marts and exchanges.

The familiar knowledge of this fact, however, is too little diffused among the people. Were it not so, they could not be befooled into believing, as many now do,—that the corn-laws have wrought the existing depression. Mr. Sadler, fully comprehending the importance of the question, in all its bearings, would have desired to see both the government and the people more familiarly conversant with its leading principles. He felt convinced that by neither the one nor the other was its intrinsic weight properly appreciated. The government, busied with other affairs, left the monetary system to shift for itself; and the people, driven to and fro by every fancy of the theorist, bawled for or against the Bank-Charter, or for or against Joint-Stock-Banks, as the case might be; but never appeared thoroughly to understand,

and to insist upon, the two, grand, necessary points, —that the circulating medium should be *sufficient* ; and that it should be *equally and steadily supplied*.

To provide for the nation in these two indispensable points, Mr. Sadler held to be the duty of the government. We cannot assert him to have been the favorer of this or that particular scheme ; but on these two main objects his eye was always fixed.

Whether they would not be most entirely and securely attained by a National Bank, or a State paper-money, issued by a distinct government office ; only on the security of funded property ; and without variation in amount, except within strictly-defined limits,—may be matter of opinion. Could some such scheme be devised, and could any government summon up courage enough to propound it, it is clear that two benefits would result. First, an annual profit to the government, of about one million, *minus* the expense of the establishment ; and secondly, an equable state of trade ; the establishment and maintainance of which, would, of itself, be one of the greatest benefits that could be conferred on the whole country.

The first and most lamentable want, however, evidently is,—that of a clearer and better understanding of this matter among the people at large.

We are not desiring to inculcate any new or strange doctrine, when we assert, in the words of the Bullion Report of 1810, that “an increase in the quantity of the local currency of a particular country *will raise prices* in that country, exactly in the same manner as an increase in the general supply of precious metals raises prices all over the world.”

Thus, for instance, a sheep, six hundred years ago, might be bought in England for one, two, or three shillings. The purchase of the same kind of animal would now require twenty, thirty, or forty shillings. The cause of this advance is not to be found in the greater scarcity of sheep, leading to an enhancement of price ; but to the influx of the precious metals, and the consequent greater abundance of money.

In like manner, observes Dr. Johnson, “If eggs are a penny a dozen in the Highlands, it is not because eggs are many, but because pence are few.”

The augmentation of the money of Europe, and of the world, arising from the discovery of the American mines, has raised prices throughout the globe ; probably fifteen hundred per cent. If new mines could be discovered, which, in the next ten years, should treble the quantity of gold and silver now in circulation, the consequence would

necessarily be, that prices, generally, would rise to three times their present level.

The same effect would be produced, if this or any other country could isolate itself, and could then augment its currency by means of paper-money, keeping that paper-money in good credit.

This we may observe in the years between 1810 to 1818. We had then often nearly fifty millions of paper-money in circulation. The necessary consequence was, that prices were, generally, about twice what they now are. We are accustomed to speak of "war-prices;"—the more accurate description would be, "paper-money prices."

In 1819, the legislature resolved on changing this system. They declared, that every person issuing a bank-note should be compelled to exchange it, whenever called upon, for a certain fixed amount of gold. This involved the discontinuance and destruction of nearly one-half of the existing paper-money.

Now, as the issue of that paper-money had raised prices at least from sixty to one hundred per cent., it necessarily followed, that the recal of it reduced prices in an equal degree. This we have already shewn in a former chapter.*

* See p. 38.

Hence, by the return to cash payments, in 1819, we did in effect reduce prices about one-half, leaving the National Debt unaltered ; which was tantamount to a practical doubling of that burden.

It is important that this operation of “ low prices ” should be understood ; and that the people should learn how much their commercial prosperity depends upon the state of the currency.

We have already seen, again and again, by the changes which took place between 1819 and 1822, and between 1822 and 1824, and between 1824 and 1826, and between 1830 and 1836, and between 1838 and 1841,—how fearfully the addition or subtraction of four or five millions, to or from the currency, may raise or depress the whole trading and manufacturing interests of these kingdoms. Surely, then, the people should keep their attention steadily fixed on this point ; and not be led into foolish and endless fancies about “ free-trade ” and “ commercial tariffs ; ” when the fact is, that with an insufficient circulating medium, no imaginable tariff which the wit of man could devise, could make trade prosperous, or prices remunerating.

There is another kind of folly into which the English people have been recently led, and which seems to be becoming more and more rife, daily, from the absence of opposition ;—we allude to

the passion for *cheapness* ; the encouragement given to competition ; and the perpetual assumption that a lowering of prices must be a public good.

Now even such a political economist as Smith, had sense enough to see and to declare, that “ High prices and plenty are prosperity ; low prices and want are misery.” And nothing can be more certain than the fact ; that if we seek out those spots of the earth where prices are the lowest, there we shall always find, as a never-absent concomitant, a great degree of misery and want among the people.

But surely if ever there was a people who were bound in a peculiar manner to eschew low prices, the English are that people.

Imagine, for a moment, a village containing twelve heads of families and employers, (besides servants and labourers,)—ten of whom are producers, growers, or artificers ; while the other two live upon fixed rents or interest of money, paid to them by the former ten. Suppose, then, that a mania for cheapness seizes upon these people ; encouraged, of course, by the two persons who are non-producers ; and imagine that by competition, and the fear of competition, all their produce and the fruits of their industry are equally and simultaneously reduced *one-half* ; or, at least, so reduced, as to bring down their pro-

fits, and also their expenses, by a clear fifty per cent : Is it not abundantly obvious, that the only real gainers by the change, would be, the two who lived on their fixed incomes ; and whose incomes would now be, by the change, practically doubled ; while all that the producing class would realize, would be, the privilege of doing *more* business for the *same* incomes ?

And where is the difference between this fancied case, and what we now see passing around us ? Could we single out the case of a holder of Consols, who drew a dividend of £1000. a year in 1818, and who draws the same dividend now ; and could we call for the particulars of his expenditure ; we should assuredly find, that the very same house,* food, clothing, &c., which he obtained in 1818 for £1000. a year, he could have now, for £600., probably for £500. He is therefore either saving £400. a year by the change, or else living in a much more luxurious manner. But what do the *producers* of his luxuries gain by the change ? Just the pleasure of doing much more business than before for the same aggregate profit. We have lately heard, through the public press, that the manufacturers in Manches-

* House-rent has suffered less reduction than many other items ; but dwellings which let for £130. to £150. in 1818, are now generally to be obtained at from £80. to £100.

ter are now giving *thrice as many* goods as they did in 1818, for the same money. And yet, strange to say, this infatuated course is gloried and exulted in by many, and still greater cheapness desiderated ! Not content with having doubled the National Debt once, they would gladly quadruple it ; and still fancy that they were doing the people of England good service. How many degrees of lunacy do these people require, to complete their qualification for Bedlam ?

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE NATIONAL ECONOMY OF THE ISRAELITES.

ALTHOUGH we feel bound to advert to the topic which we have chosen for the present chapter, we are quite aware that it is absolutely impossible that it should receive any thing like justice at our hands. The subject is so large ; it is one so little understood and so seldom handled ; and the materials before us are so slender, that we might well decline all allusion to the subject, were we not conscious that such an omission would operate as an act of injustice to Mr. Sadler's memory. The matter is so important ; it occupied so large a space in his thoughts, and was so frequently adverted to in his conversation, that an entire silence with reference to it could not fail, with those who knew him, to bring our whole

narrative into discredit. Much to be regretted is it, on every account, but especially on that of the public, that his long-cherished intention, of drawing up a distinct Essay on the subject, was postponed from time to time, till neither strength nor mental force remained to him. All that we can do, in the absence of such a document, is briefly to indicate the general tenor of his thoughts, and to commend the topic to the serious investigation of those who are competent to the inquiry.

Generally, then, we would say, that Mr. Sadler wholly dissented from the common opinion,—that the natural economy which was divinely prescribed to Moses for the governance of the children of Israel, was in its nature distinct from, and opposed to, what sound judgment would have dictated for any other nation. Certainly, the usual spirit in which men read the *civil* and *political* laws and institutes of Moses,—apart alike from the *moral* law of the ten commands, and the *ceremonial* worship of the temple,—is that of wonder and ignorant curiosity. That such enactments can be at all adapted to the rest of mankind, they never dream. They look upon them as very strange and almost impracticable injunctions; which must, they suppose, have had *some* meaning, considering that they came from God himself;—but which never could have been intended to extend to any but

Israelites; or, in fact, have been *possible* in their application, had they even been so intended.

Such readers of the books of Moses forget that these laws were prescribed, not to the children of Jacob only, but to all those, also, who joined them as proselytes; and, that, beyond all doubt, the happiest thing that could have befallen all the other nations of the earth, would have been their conversion to Judaism, and their being *thus brought under these very laws*.

Mr. Sadler wholly rejected the customary notion. So far from reading the institutes of Moses as mere records of laws wholly inapplicable to any existing society,—he read them *for instruction*: thoroughly receiving them as the dicta of the highest wisdom, and the lessons of the purest benevolence. So far did he carry this conviction, that we believe he would scarcely have hesitated to re-enact the whole Mosaical code, for any civilized and Christian nations of the present day.

Throughout his published writings, he constantly appeals to the institutes of Moses, as to the highest possible authority. In his book on Ireland, he thus rapidly but emphatically calls in the authority of the Jewish lawgiver:—

“ In the institutions of the Jewish legislator, which, as Montesquieu somewhere observes, were to the Israelites positive laws, though we read them

only as precepts, the legal provision for the poor holds a most conspicuous place, and has, probably, been the foundation of all similar institutions throughout Christendom. The tithe of every third year, stored for the purpose ; the remnant of the crops of every year (fixed at one-sixtieth part) ; the share of the entire produce of every seventh year ; independently of sundry other benevolent ordinances, of much importance, made in their behalf, —formed a provision for the poor of Israel which has, as yet, never been equalled in any country of the world. On the lowest possible computation, were that institution transferred to England, it would treble the amount now raised amongst us. And this ample provision was carried into effect and penally enforced. Besides all this, it ought to be remembered that the fundamental institutions of the Theocracy, such as the minute division of property, and its restoration to the original owners or their descendants, every fiftieth year ; preserved perhaps, a vaster mass of the population in equal and easy circumstances than was ever the case with any other people. The learned Selden has written on the provision for the poor of Israel, and to him I must refer for further information on this interesting subject. I shall not, however, omit confronting by this divine institution a modern objection to our own poor-laws, and certainly the

most absurd, notwithstanding its prevalence, of any that has hitherto been advanced. It is now said that a public provision for the poor is totally subversive of the very principle and nature of charity. Such might as well affirm that the voluntary fulfilment of those other duties of social or public life, which happen to be recognised and enjoined by law, (and they are many,) likewise loses all its value. But to the point. Is not voluntary charity connected with this public provision for the poor, in these sacred records? Let those who doubt it, turn to the laws and exhortations of Moses and the prophets, and they will soon be satisfied on this head. Notwithstanding the legal relief prescribed, still the duty of personal charity, the liberality with which it should be dispensed, and the generous feelings with which its exercise was to be accompanied, are solemnly dictated; "Thou shalt surely give him; and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land. Therefore, I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide to thy brother, to thy poor, and thy needy in the land." (Deut. xv. 10, 11.)

"I shall not refrain from going further into the

subject, as it respects the institutions of Moses. We have seen that the right of the poor, and their “business to be where they are,”—are there fully recognised: even the term itself is sanctioned in holy writ. And only suppose that the Deity has the same merciful consideration for an Irishman as for an Israelite, and then some of the passages may, perhaps, be found striking. God is represented there as the bestower of this right:—“Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any; he is mighty in strength and wisdom: he giveth RIGHT to the poor.” (Job xxxvi. 5, 6.) As the upholder of it:—“The Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the RIGHT of the poor.” (Ps. cxl. 12.) As its awful vindicator:—“Woe unto them that take away the RIGHT of the poor:” (Isa. x. 2.) The ground of this right is likewise revealed to us; and an awful and unalienable one it is!—“The land is MINE, and ye are the strangers and sojourners with me!” (Lev. xxv. 23.) It is founded on the sufficiency of divine providence:—“Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy bounty for the poor!” (Ps. lxviii. 10.) On the feelings of human kindred:—“Thy poor brother!” (Deut. xv. 7.) On respect for human misery:—“Thou shalt not vex him; thou shalt surely give him!” (Deut. xv.) On the vicissitudes of human life:—“Love ye therefore the strangers, for ye were strangers!”

(Deut. x. 19.) On the grateful remembrance of past mercies :—“ It shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and the widow ; and thou shalt remember that thou wert a bondman in the land of Egypt :” (Deut. xxiv. 21, 22.) On the certain prospect of human suffering :—“ Blessed be the man that considereth the poor and needy : the Lord will deliver *him* in his time of trouble ; will preserve ; will comfort ; will strengthen *him*, when he lieth sick upon his bed,” (Ps. xli. 1—3). It is guaranteed by the promises of God ;—“ For this thing the Lord thy God will bless thee :” (Deut. xv. 10.) By his denunciations :—“ If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry ; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows and your children fatherless !” (Exod. xxii. 23, 24,) It is further represented as a right, for the neglect of which the observance of no other duties, however sacred, will atone :—“ Incense is an abomination to me !—Relieve the oppressed ; judge the fatherless ; plead for the widow !” (Isa. i. 13, 17.) “ Is not this the fast that I have chosen ?—to deal thy bread to the hungry ! and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house ! when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him ; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh !” (Isa. lviii. 6, 7.) And lastly,

and above all, the Deity has connected this right of the poor with the highest and most distinguished attributes of His nature, and placed His pity for them amongst His brightest perfections and sublimest titles :—" Sing unto God, sing praises to his name, extol him that rideth upon the heavens, by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. A father of the fatherless, a judge of the widows, is God, in his holy habitation." (Ps. lxxviii. 4, 5.) Hear Moses' last sublime description of him : " The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible!—He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment ! Love ye therefore the stranger ! "

" Institutions like these, and so guaranteed, had doubtless a wonderful effect on the people on whom they were imposed. We are told, now, that this care and preservation of the poor would increase population ; this, however, was regarded by the divine philosopher and legislator of Israel as a signal mark of the divine complacency, and experience proved it such. Hence he exultingly adds to the passage last quoted : " Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons, and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude ! " " *

* *Ireland, its Evils*, &c. 8vo. pp. 212—217.

Again, among the papers which Mr. Sadler had prepared for a continuation of his work on Population, the following rapid sketch of this part of the argument appears :—

“There is one authority of antiquity to whom Mr. Malthus has declined making any appeal ; the motive of which neglect, however, it is not very difficult to assign. It is not because of the want of sufficient antiquity ; for it concerns the most ancient legislator in the world, of whom we have any certain account ;—it is not because his institutions are imperfectly known to us ; for we know them now more minutely, than any nation did the regulations of their lawgivers thousands of years ago. It is not because they were never carried into effect, —on the contrary, they remained the unalterable code of a numerous people, for a longer period than any other nation upon earth retained their customs. Nor can it be, because when put into practice, they were found to be imperfectly adapted to the prosperity and welfare of the people to whom they were given ; for we know, on the contrary, that never were any people similarly circumstanced, who attained to so high a pitch of national prosperity, as those on whom they were conferred. It is not because they have no reference to the subject at issue ; for it is contemplated in them more fully, and provided for more efficaciously, than

by any code upon earth, existing, or that ever did exist. Lastly, it cannot be, because that they are too antiquated to have any reference to modern times, or the present condition of society ; for they were the precursor, if not the foundation, of that sacred religion which influences the opinions and institutions of the civilized world. Touching our own laws, our unrivalled legislator, the great Alfred, made them the foundation of that code which is the admiration of the earth :—I mean the laws of Moses.

“ To this sacred authority, from which the learned believe that the best philosophers of antiquity derived their highest illumination ; and to which the most eloquent of those writers appealed, as affording the highest example of sublimity of expression, Mr. Malthus has made not the least allusion ! He “ hears not Moses and the prophets.” That legislator and philosopher, was not one of Mr. Malthus’s “ thinking persons ;” though the “ smallness of the state,” to which he had to lead the multitude committed to him, and still more the twelve divisions into which he was to apportion it, one might have thought would have “ brought the subject home to him ;” at all events, if Mr. Malthus’s view of the principle of population had been true, it would have been brought home to every person, *feeling* as well as “ thinking,” who had the

misfortune to be confined within the narrow limits assigned to his tribe, and subject to those institutions which had a constant and necessary tendency to multiply their numbers ; and consequently (on the footing of this theory) to perpetuate and increase human wants beyond endurance, and spread their concomitants, wretchedness and profligacy.

“ In looking at the legislative theories of the philosophers, or at the institutions of the legislators, of antiquity ; and giving them full credit for a sincere intention of securely providing for the subsistence of the people, in a comfortable and sufficient mediocrity, it is impossible not to be struck with the great difficulty they had to encounter,—inseparable, indeed, from their fundamental principle,—that of an original division of territory into primary and integral parts, assigning one of these to every citizen ; and the constant preservation of them in that form of equality. They thus attempted what was a palpable impossibility,—to make the number of children coincide exactly with the number of these unalterable shares. Their expedients were numerous, in order to obviate this difficulty, but they were all inefficient. But, again, had they succeeded in doing so, the consequences would still have been most pernicious. Nothing could have encouraged more fatally that sloth which is inherent in our natural constitution, and

all the demoralizing and fatal consequences it produces, than the certainty of this support; connected with the system of slavery which their institutions invariably recognized. Excitements might remain, under such a state of things, to the heroic and ambitious passions; but there could be but little room for the social or domestic virtues, or that happiness which they alone can constitute. This territorial division was doubtless intended to furnish the citizens with a certain support, and to maintain as large a community of them as might be practicable, on a system approaching to equality; and to repress that undue accumulation of property which is conceived to be injurious at all times; but which, when so few sources of human industry were developed, must have been more peculiarly so. But the difficulties attending these schemes were insurmountable, and the chief portion of Aristotle's work is taken up in pointing them out.

“ It is here that the superiority of the Mosaic legislation is most conspicuous. Many parts of that system would shew its author to have been one of the profoundest philosophers that ever existed, even were we to assign to him no higher character;* but in this instance he has evinced the most

* For instance; his prescribing rest to the land of Canaan, at least every seventh year. It was the dream, for awhile,

intimate knowledge of human nature and human interests, and the deepest attention to human rights. He accomplishes in behalf of his people more than all the legislators of antiquity attempted; yet so as to avoid all those fatal consequences which were deemed inevitable, and found to be so. He divides the land, circumscribed as the whole was within narrow limits, into twelve parts; and these divisions were to be parcelled out amongst the heads of families; but here the partition stops. Room is left for human industry; its motive and its scope are both continued. But above all, he still allowed the fluctuation of property for a limited time; after which it was again to revert back to its original heirs. This term was fifty years; sufficiently long to afford all the advantages (and important they were,) resulting from the fluctuation of property, and from the stimulus and reward of exertion; but not long enough to inflict an irreparable mischief upon all the innocent heirs of the improvident

of our modern agriculturists, that there might be a perpetual succession of crops; this, however, it was found, could never be pursued with impunity without extraneous manures; which at once shewed its impossibility as a general system. But that a legislator from Egypt, where no fallows ever take place, in consequence of the fertilizing inundations of the Nile,—should institute a septennial fallow, might be adduced as an unparalleled instance of sagacity and wisdom; even supposing it to have proceeded from no higher source.

and profligate, and finally to derange the beautiful simplicity and benevolence of his system. Wealth, therefore, could not be greatly monopolized, (a tremendous evil in a strictly agricultural country,) nor yet could the country ever be without it, (which next to that would be its greatest curse;)—the permission to purchase and to hold any quantity of land that might be offered for sale, until the year of Jubilee, would leave abundant scope for the exercise of the faculty of accumulation. But where there is wealth, there must also be poverty and distress; indeed there will be the latter, whether the former exists or not, in every country, and at all times. The axiom of the inspired legislator touching these, was this: “The poor shall never cease out of the land.” These he recommended, under the most touching considerations, and by the most solemn exhortations, to the constant and unwearied attention of the prosperous; exhibiting the character of that JEHOVAH, whose worship and service he established, as their friend, their supporter, their avenger. Nor did he stop here: greatly differing from our modern philosophers and divines, he joined together, in his system, what no man can with impunity put asunder,—voluntary charity and compulsory relief. His system of poor-laws is the most admirable that can be conceived:—their nature, both with regard to the burden they

enforced, and the way in which it was exacted, will form a small portion of the subject of a subsequent work ; * in the mean time, I beg leave to refer the reader to the learned Selden on this interesting and seldom-considered subject.

“ On the subject of marriage, and the increase of the species, it is surely unnecessary to say, that never was there a legislator so explicit. He announces this duty, as from the mouth of the Creator, and records, as His primary command :— “ Increase and multiply.” He represents the same Eternal Being as reiterating this law at the renovation of the species. Constantly does he represent God as conferring fecundity as His special blessing ; not merely on individuals, but on nations. In a word, he makes the unlimited multiplication of the species, a test and token of the Divine complacency.

“ But did he, after thus directly promoting population by all possible means—invent or prescribe any “ checks ;” whereby to pull down with one hand, what he built up with the other ? There is nothing of the kind to be found in his legislation ; there is nothing that can be twisted or tortured into such a meaning ; otherwise we may rest assured the attempt would have been made.

* Referring to his projected *Essay on the Mosaic Economy*.

“ Rather may it be asserted, that the whole system was in consonance with the first and universal command before mentioned. The postponement of the period of marriage in either sex, so as to balance the effect of its universality,—is now constantly recommended,—assuming prolificness to be naturally excessive. On the contrary, the expounders of the Mosaic law, the Rabbins, not only held the original command to be imperative on all, but fixed the period of obedience for both sexes very early,—that of the men at eighteen,* the females at twelve, which was deemed a ripe age.† They might marry sooner, but were not allowed to postpone it later,‡ and very harsh constructions were put upon the conduct of those who did. Finally, celibacy was regarded as a reproach;§ and to build up the house of their fathers, and keep the name alive in Israel, an honourable duty. It is therefore reasonable to believe they would universally marry, and such we know to have been the fact.

“ If the institutions of Moses did not place any limitation to increase, either by restraining marriages, or by prescribing the periods at which they

* Leo of Modena. *Cerem. des Juess.* p. 3.

† Selden, *Uxor. Heb. c. ii. p. 3.*

‡ Calmet's *Dissertations.* Sur les Mar. des Juiss. p. 1.

§ Isa. iv. 1.

should take place, or continue prolific ; much less did they tolerate the idea of rectifying the prolificness and increase of the species by child-murder. Moses is the only ancient legislator in the world, of whom we have any distinct knowledge, who forbids, under all circumstances whatsoever, this atrocious and detestable crime. His people were fully made aware that it was for this very offence, amongst others, that the nations whom they were to dispossess of Canaan, were devoted to destruction ; it was represented as so enormous, that the land itself was defiled with it, and ready to vomit forth its cruel and polluted inhabitants. They were threatened with equal chastisements, if they participated in the like offence. So much for the fairness of those who ascribe cruelty and partiality to the maxims of this great legislator. That these laws were effectual, we cannot doubt ; even profane history records the fact. The candid and accurate historian before quoted, says of them, that “ to kill their infants is thought by the Jews to be a heinous sin.” *

“ The system of slavery, it is well observed, is exceedingly hostile to the multiplication of the species ; especially that sort of slavery which prevailed amongst the Greeks and Romans ; investing the haughty master with the command of the

* Tacitus, Hist. l. 5.

life of his wretched victim in many cases ; and in most others with ‘rights,’ as they were termed, totally incompatible with his well-being. Perpetual servitude, to a certain extent, was certainly permitted by the Mosaic system ; some of the inhabitants of the land were allowed to remain under bondage ; and it is no stretch of imagination to believe that the change of masters, to such, was most happy : it would not, however, have been prudent to have granted to them that influence in the community, which might have endangered the institutions established amongst the chosen people, and which it required all the vigilance of the legislator to preserve. But the number of these bond-servants must have been exceedingly limited,* and could have had no effect whatever on the growth of the general population. Perpetual servitude, too, was allowed among the Hebrews themselves, but it was to be voluntary ; after long experience of the state to which the party had to submit, and the master to whom he submitted himself ; and under prescribed public formalities. But this servitude, or, if you please so to call it, Slavery, amongst the Hebrews, had nothing in common with the system used amongst the heathen nations. Even as it regarded the lowest state of

* Patrick on Exod. xxi.

it; "thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, or the stranger that is within thy gates,"—none of the duties of humanity were to be withheld, much less outraged; needful rest was ordained; necessary support, even to the poorest and most unprotected, was prescribed; nor even were their feelings to be wounded: "Thou shalt not vex him, for thou shalt remember that thou also wast a stranger in the land of Egypt." The laws of Moses were not those of Draco; but they most scrupulously protected the person from wrongful treatment, and severely retaliated when the rights of the people were infringed; much more so when life was endangered or taken: but those laws were to extend to those in whose behalf they were the most wanted. Those who quote Moses on behalf of slavery, it is to be wished, would please to confine the slavery for which they plead to that of Moses. There was no toleration for barbarity to the meanest or the most unprotected of the human race: even if one of these wretched beings fled from a cruel and oppressive master, they were interdicted from delivering him up again. "He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he liketh best. Thou shalt not oppress him!" These, their servants, were, it need not be added, permitted to marry; it is taken for granted in these laws, that they would, and that

they would be prolific.* Even the father of this wonderful people, Abraham, could arm 318 of his servants—not captured in war, not seized by piracy, by which the ranks of slavery were replenished amongst the polite nations; (for we find him disdaining such means of aggrandisement,)[†] but born in his own house. [‡]

“May I add, that this sacred legislator did not confine his consideration to human beings; he extended it even to the animal creation: he forbade any outrage upon even their feelings and appetites: he enjoined, at short and stated intervals, a total cessation from the otherwise perpetual labour of those which are doomed to a state of toil; as well brutes as human beings; so that his institution of the Sabbath is perhaps even yet more an institution of mercy than of devotion: he respected life indeed in its humblest form, but especially maternal life; of which instances must instantly rise in the reader’s mind, of exquisite simplicity and pathos; § all doubtless having a special and further end in view; to inspire those to whom his laws were promulgated, with the strongest consideration for the like portion of the human race, especially under similar and unprotected circum-

* Levit. xxv. 41.

† Gen. xiv.

‡ Gen. xiv. 14.

§ Ex. xxiii. 19; xxxiv. 26. Deut. xiv. 21; xxii. 6, 7.

stances. But I forget myself: I am contending with a system which despises such feelings—which can look upon the prolificness of the matron as a proof of her self-indulgence merely; and which sees in the child (pure or impure) an object of, comparatively speaking, little value to society—“others would supply their place!” But to return:—

“We find, then, here, the historical test of Mr. Malthus’s system. A country confessedly of small extent; and that extent not nearly all cultivated, or even cultivatable; though somewhat larger and far more prolific than Mr. Gibbon allows it to be, who describes it as “a territory scarcely superior to Wales, either in fertility or extent.”* Yet the inhabitants of this country, so early as the reign of David, amounted probably to nearly seven millions of souls, independently of the strangers who still partially inhabited the territory; and we have reason to suppose that it was afterwards even yet more populous. Without entering into any minute calculation, it was doubtless more than thrice as thickly peopled as Great Britain, and more than six times as much so as China! That “the preventive check” did not operate at all, nor indeed found entrance amongst them, we have already given

* Templeman however only estimates it at one-sixth of the extent of England.

abundant proof; and that the grand positive one, War, from which it is true they were not exempted, though less exposed to its ravages probably than many of the surrounding nations, — did not materially thin their population, we have the evidence of numerous facts to shew. Unwholesome occupations they had none, and one would suppose their numbers must have effectually prevented those excesses which are still more fatal. Nearly the whole business, then, of “keeping down the numbers” of this wonderful people “to the level of their means of subsistence,” must have devolved upon pestilence and famine. Visitations of this kind their sacred historians seem never to have omitted recording; they were too intent on resolving them into judicial punishments from Jehovah, on a faithless people transgressing his revealed laws. But we find fewer instances of famine in the long period which their authentic history embraces, stretching onwards over nearly two thousand years,—than have often occurred in this country in half a century. The most grievous of them occurred in the first stage of their history; when there were not so many hundreds of them, no nor tens of hundreds, as there were afterwards millions. Pestilences amongst them are represented as still rarer. But perhaps what will be deemed more satisfactory proof as to

the sufficiency of the supply for this immense population, and consequently that neither of these scourges were necessary to thin their numbers in order to their being fed,—is afforded by those incidental evidences which are scattered through every part of their history, plainly indicating a state of plenty and happiness ; while the language of their prophets, inveighing against the luxury of the nation, may be held as conclusive evidence that they were not, as a nation, suffering from want. In like manner, in the Scriptures of the New Testament, we find not the least indication of general suffering from want of food, nor any evidence that the other check, pestilence, was in operation. We have abundant reason, nevertheless, to believe, that at this period the population was exceedingly numerous, compared with any thing now known in the world ; though we have no documents whereby to calculate with any degree of exactness its amount. The story of the siege of Jerusalem, and the immense number of Jews engaged in defending their capital, who fell by sword and famine during the siege, or were slaughtered or dispersed after it was taken,—though the Christian part of the population, then exceedingly numerous, had, on the faith of the prophecy of Christ, previously withdrawn,—affords abundant evidence of the astonishing populousness of Judea in reference to

its extent. This indeed is a fact to which cotemporary heathen authors bear abundant testimony, and it has, I believe, never been disputed.

“ Now, that this population, immense as it was, subsisted themselves on their own territory, we have the best of all possible proof ; namely, because they had nothing wherewith to procure or purchase supplies from other countries. They had no mines to open ; they engaged in no manufactures ; but, as Josephus informs us, were entirely employed in agriculture ; and under such circumstances, and by a similar course, it is no hyperbole to assert, that the present produce of the earth would in this, or any nation where, heretofore, so much of the labour has been directed to other objects, be increased many fold, and perhaps with an equal accession of human happiness.

“ The Mosaic law was certainly the best calculated to make a people happy, by obliging every man to live by his labour, without luxury or ambition, and free from the danger of being totally ruined, from the temptation of becoming excessively rich, or from too great a desire after change and novelty. Every man cultivated his own vine, field, or orchard, and could indifferently handle the plough and flail, or the sword and bow, as occasion required ; but preferred still a quiet life under his vine and fig-tree. This is

“ what their law-giver enforced, not only by the
 “ example of the old patriarchs, but much more
 “ by the blessings promised to their obedience ;
 “ these were neither gold, nor silver, nor precious
 “ stones ; stately houses nor sumptuous furniture ;
 “ but the former and the latter rain, regular sea-
 “ sons, plenty of corn, wine, and oil, increase of
 “ cattle, *multitude of children*, with a quiet peace-
 “ ful enjoyment of them, and victory over their
 “ enemies ; all which, joined to the natural fertility
 “ of the soil, proved such powerful encourage-
 “ ments to agriculture, that there is scarce any
 “ known people that gave themselves more en-
 “ tirely and universally to it, than the Jews.
 “ Accordingly, from the most opulent families of
 “ the tribe of Judah, to the most indigent of that
 “ of Benjamin ; from the oldest to the youngest,
 “ we find them either ploughing, or sowing, or
 “ reaping ; at the threshing-floor, or feeding their
 “ numerous herds.” * Their whole history, and
 literature, bears abundant testimony that such
 was their state. “ Behold,” says their royal bard,
 “ Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, and
 “ walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the
 “ labour of thine hands ; O well is thee, and happy
 “ shalt thou be. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful

* Universal Hist. Antient, ed. 1747. vol. iii. p. 186. and note.

“ vine upon the walls of thine house ; thy children
“ like the olive-branches round about thy table.
“ The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou
“ shalt see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the
“ days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy chil-
“ dren’s children, and peace upon Israel.” *

“ Nothing can well be supposed more interesting, than the consideration of the effects of the laws of Moses, in promoting the prosperity of the Jewish nation for so vast a period of time as that comprehended in their history. Nothing can be more conclusive, as to the great argument of the imputed tendency of mankind to an undue increase ; which this history brings to the test of experience more fully, and for a far longer period, than that of any other nation that ever existed upon earth. The circumstance of Mr. Malthus having rejected all consideration of it,—appealing, as he does, to most other ancient and modern nations,—appears a most singular and doubtless a designed one ; for he specially alludes to the history of the Israelites during their bondage in Egypt ; exemplifying the prolificness of the human race by their increase there, which is distinctly declared to be a consequence of the miraculous interposition of God ; and nevertheless dropping all mention of their growth

* Psalm cxxviii.

and its effects, when it is presented to us in the usual light of ordinary events. In the former case we have some warrant from profane writers, in attributing a supernatural fecundity to the Israelites; those writers' observations indeed apply generally to the Egyptians, with whom it is most probable they were confounded, as they knew nothing of the Jews as distinct from the former. Afterwards, however, we never hear of anything supernatural connected with their multiplication; their institutions and habits were known to contribute to that result: and, as we have before shown, whether taking the population of Palestine from the sacred writers, or gathering our information from other sources,—it was confessedly so great as to have demanded the special consideration of Mr. Malthus: and above all, it seemed to demand of him an explanation, how, with their known habits and institutions—affording every possible facility to increase; and in the absence, to a great degree, of his “checks,” one and all,—what prevented that population, after it had attained to a certain height, from doubling according to his ratios?

“I meant only to have spent a very few words in my appeal to the greatest legislator of antiquity, and the effect of his institutions on that which is assuredly the most ancient people now existing

upon earth ; but the subject became so interesting, that I could not dismiss it so hastily as I intended, and now I feel that the great points on which I ought to have dwelt, have been very inadequately handled. Enough, however, has been said, if we credit either sacred or profane history, to have some considerable effect in the great question before us. The moral institutions of Moses, whom we still revere ; and those of a greater than Moses, of whom indeed Moses was but the precursor ; and whom we profess “to hear in all things,”—both propound to us certain duties, (amongst which the ‘preventive check’ has no place whatsoever,)—to the observance of which is annexed, the promise of a certainty and sufficiency of support and sustenance ; and amidst the promised rewards of this obedience, it is somewhat singular that an immunity from the “positive checks,” (famine, pestilence, &c.) is unequivocally promised,—in a word, happiness is the reward of unreserved obedience. The effect of these institutions in increasing the number of human beings, so far from having been overlooked, is expressly and emphatically declared ; and again, instead of this anticipated increase being deemed adverse to, it is *identified with*, enlarging prosperity and happiness. How does Mr. Malthus’s theory agree with this system ? Not

at all,—it flatly contradicts it. Speaking of the “prudential check,”—which is a virtue of his own creation, and in his theory of morals is the paramount one; but which, as betraying the mass of mankind into vice, is, under a flimsy mask, *vice itself*,—he fearlessly says, “An attention to this obligation is of more effect in the prevention of misery, than all the other virtues combined; and if in violation of this duty it were the general custom to follow the first impulse of nature, and marry at the age of puberty,” (*which the Jews ever did*,) “the universal prevalence of every known virtue, in the greatest conceivable degree, would fail of rescuing society from the most wretched and desperate state of want, and all the diseases and famines which usually accompany it.”* I leave him to reconcile this statement with either Jewish history or Jewish law; to say nothing of the spirit of Christianity: could he even do so, I shall shew him hereafter, that he would still have to reconcile it to sound philosophy and universal experience.

“In the mean time it is a merciful and pleasing consideration that we have the experience of past times, as well as the ever-present and sufficient mercies of the Deity to repose upon, amidst these

* *Malthus*, 4to. p. 493.

threatening systems, so adverse to the best feelings of our nature. Seeing, as we do, a country probably far less fertile than our own, sustaining a population so much more crowded, and sustaining it in plenty and happiness, and continuing so to sustain it for a long period of succeeding centuries,—let those that are incapable or indisposed to look deeper into the secret causes and effects by which these results are accomplished, take courage; let them not fear, either for themselves or their posterity,—let them, as their fathers have done before them, “Trust in the Lord, and be doing good;”—“dwell in the land, for verily they shall be fed.”

We have given these two extracts, in order to shew how earnestly and enthusiastically Mr. Sadler’s mind entered into this great topic, and how much it is to be regretted, that his purpose of a thorough investigation of it was frustrated. Two points, especially, in the Mosaic system, had impressed him with great force; and his remarks in conversation, with reference to them, were often exceedingly striking. These were, the law restoring to every family its original possessions, at the opening of every fiftieth year;* and the absolute prohibition of the taking interest upon money lent.†

* *Levit.* xxv. 8—16.

† *Levit.* xxv. 35—37.

Most of our readers will probably exclaim with astonishment when they are told, that he regarded each of these regulations as most wise and beneficent ; and as calculated to promote the happiness, alike of that or of any other people. But had he lived to complete his design, he would assuredly have put it out of any one's power to deal lightly with either of these propositions. We hesitate,—and yet we cannot wholly decline, to offer some faint outlines of his views on these points.

It will be seen at once, that both these provisos,—the restoration of lands at the commencement of each fiftieth year ; and the prohibition of all charge of interest for money loaned to the necessitous,—are most stringent and powerful checks on that which is perhaps the favourite vice or passion of the present day,—namely, *accumulation*.

This is at once admitted, but let not this view of the case be exaggerated. There is nothing in these provisos, which could tend to produce a dead level in society, or to destroy an aristocracy, or to render a rich man a rarity among us. No such result is likely to follow ; no such result *did* follow among the Israelites.

In constituting his commonwealth, the Jewish ruler committed no violence on the universal order of human society. There were at all periods “princes,” and “great men” among the children

of Israel ; and as such were they planted in the promised land. We observe one instance in the case of Caleb ; (Josh. xv. 13—19.) Another in the case of Joshua ; (Josh xix. 50.) Another, in Boaz, “ a mighty man of wealth.” (Ruth ii. 1.) Another, in Nabal, who “ was very great.” (1 Sam. xxv. 2.) And again, Barzillai, “ a very great man.” (2 Sam. xix. 32.) Throughout the books of Moses we meet with “ princes,” and “ heads of houses ;” and to such, a princely portion was given, in the promised land.

The question, then, might well be asked, whether an irreversible law of entail on the families of the principal as well as other possessors, might not rather be looked upon as an aristocratic, than a democratic proviso. In truth, it conceded somewhat to each of these opposing principles ; and worked, alike, in each direction. It maintained a succession, an hereditary line of “ princes of the people,” far more effectually than any modern system. The annals of European peerages will show how evanescent is human greatness, amidst all the efforts continually used, to preserve each ancient line. “ Where, now, is Bohun ? Where is Mowbray ? Where is Mortimer ? Or, which is more than all, —Where is Plantagenet ? ” Of each, and all, how true has the saying been found,—“ Man, being in honour, abideth not.” And in what race, save that

of Israel, could a man even of low station as to worldly wealth, trace his lineage through captivity and invasions, name by name, through four thousand years ?

But while this law so maintained and preserved a genuine aristocracy,—for “ gentility is nothing else than *ancient wealth* ;”—it greatly checked that which is contrary to the public weal,—the absorption of the land among a few possessors. This was especially condemned and prohibited by the Divine lawgiver, in the messages of various of His prophets. “ Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place ; that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.” (Isa. v. 8.) In fact, this was obviously one great end of the whole enactment ;—the precluding the absorption of the lands of the weaker and less careful, by their avaricious and grasping neighbours.

And a parallel object was clearly kept in view, in the prohibition of the receipt of interest for money. The principle involved was this,—that he who had more than he required, should freely impart to him who lacked. Economically considered, however, the drift of the prohibition was to this effect :—The welfare of the whole community is best consulted, when *all*,—the *whole* of its population,—are actively engaged in production. But to admit the practice of usury, (or interest,) is to

release one person in each transaction, from the necessity of labour ; and to compel another, the borrower, to labour for both. A class of usurers or takers of interest, must be a class of drones or non-producers. This class is, in itself, an injury or dead weight to the community ; and the mischief so inflicted, must extend with the numerical extension of the class.

There is nothing in this theory which does not entirely commend itself to every man's understanding, when properly understood : but it will not be easy for us, in this brief mention of the subject, to bring it fairly before the reader's mind. The events, however, of the last seven years, may aid us in approximating somewhat towards a just conclusion.

The laws of Moses altogether prohibited the employment of " Capital " in such a manner, as that the possessors of it, without the least trouble or exertion, might be enabled to subsist in indolence, probably even in luxury, upon the labours of others.

The possessors and the worshippers of " Capital," on the other hand, now argue, that its holders should be left at perfect liberty ; not only to exact what is called by Moses " usury or increase ;" but also to do this to any extent that might be in their power ; to levy, in short, as

heavy an imposition upon the necessitous, as they possibly could obtain.

The laws of England, until within the last ten years, adopted a middle course : permitting interest to be taken, but limiting it in extent. Five per cent was made the legal bound or maximum ; beyond which no obedient subject was to carry his exactions. It is obvious that the same principle which justified this limitation, would equally have justified the confining the rate to *three* per cent, or even to *two*. The exact point at which the line shall be drawn, is a mere matter of detail, not affecting the justice of the enactment in any way.

Within the last few years, however, this proviso has been given up, and “ Capital ” has been allowed the freest scope, to assert its own value and potency in any manner its owners pleased. Has this experiment answered ? Has the change been a beneficial one for the country at large ?

Most assuredly not. The general voice of the industrious classes may distinctly be heard ; complaining that the repeal of the old limitation has established a tyranny of Capital, and a thralldom of industry. And does not this result of the experiment afford ground for a strong impression, that as a still further departure than had before existed, from the Mosaic law, has so clearly produced great evils, it is probable that a return to

the scriptural principle ; an adoption of, or at least an approximation to the Jewish system, might lead to the opposite benefits ?

The whole policy of the Jewish lawgiver plainly tended to the widest possible diffusion of plenty and happiness, and to the counteraction, as far as possible, of the vicious exercise, to excess, of the passion of accumulation. And can any one, however aristocratic may be his leanings, who is sincerely desirous of the happiness of his fellow-creatures, refuse his cordial approbation to such a system ?

It is abundantly clear, that the condition of the serfs of a Polish or Russian estate, whereon some two or three thousand labourers toil severely, and live worse than the beasts of the field, is not a prosperous one *for the mass* : whatever it may be for the diamond-vested prince, who revels in luxury at Paris, Vienna, or London, on the produce of their toil.

Equally certain is it, that the predicament of the slaves on a West Indian estate in 1830 or 1831, was vastly inferior to their state in 1840 or 1841,—although the income of the planter, living in Portland Place or Grosvenor Square, may have been larger at the former period.

The question is, whether we admit the principle, that the greatest good of the greatest number,

is a legitimate object of pursuit? If we do, then the state of society in Poland or Russia will appear to us to need alteration; the change effected in Jamaica will appear a blessed one; and we shall be prepared to value and appreciate the laws of the Israelites, which precluded the rise of any such creatures as the Russian prince or West-Indian-planter among them.

CHAPTER XVI.

CLOSE OF HIS LIFE—PERSONAL CHARACTER.

HAVING now, in such sort as we might, essayed to sketch a rough and hasty outline of the labours and opinions of Michael Thomas Sadler, it only remains to narrate the closing scenes of his life; and then to endeavour to furnish a connected view of what may be justly termed “his System.”

We have already remarked, that having, in May 1834, paid a visit to a relative at Belfast, with which place he was also connected by his interest in the extensive linen-works carried on by his firm,—he was so much pleased with the town and its neighbourhood, as to determine to fix his future residence there. He first took a house at the pleasant watering-place of Hollywood, distant about four miles from Belfast; from whence he removed in the winter to his relative's abode, in

College Square, Belfast; and in March 1835, fixed his abode at "the New Lodge," a pleasant residence about a mile from the town; where, in a few short months, his earthly existence came to its close.

Allusion has already been made, in an early chapter of this work, to a most distressing and alarming malady, which shewed itself, first in 1814, and in a slighter degree, at various other periods of his life;—the symptoms of which were, a great irregularity of pulse, pain about the region of the heart, and distressing palpitations.

The writer of these lines well remembers a fearful attack of this kind, which suddenly interrupted a journey taken by Mr. Sadler and himself, in December, 1831, into an agricultural district, which was considered likely to furnish some striking illustrations of the defects of the existing management of the poor. Without any previous indisposition, in the midst of an interesting but quiet conversation in a post-chaise, so sudden and violent a paroxysm came on, as to excite the greatest alarm even for the sufferer's life.

Mr. Sadler of course did not contemplate, when he involved himself in the trouble and expence of a removal from Yorkshire to Ireland,—the probability that his own tenure of any earthly dwelling would prove so extremely short. But a sudden

exertion, drawn forth by one of those circumstances which men call “accidental,”—in the course of this removal, brought on so violent and lengthened an attack of his complaint, as to make it clear that his own enjoyment of his new abode for any lengthened period must be regarded as at least very doubtful.

During the whole of the summer of 1834, which was spent at Hollywood, the disease hung about him; but no considerable alarm was yet excited, either in his own mind or those of his friends. Still an irregularity of pulse, with frequent difficulty of breathing, was generally perceptible; and his state of health became matter of just anxiety.

Unquestionably the thing most needed, was, regularity of habits, and calmness of mind. The disease had been greatly augmented by his parliamentary labours, which frequently kept him almost without food, and to a great degree without sleep, for days together. His last year’s labour, on the Factory question, was sufficient to shorten any man’s life by three years; and it probably shortened his by *ten*. Still, however, though conscious of his indisposition, he could not be induced to give up his habits of close study, insufficient exercise, and hasty and irregular meals. And while in this doubtful state, the dissolution of Parliament, in December 1834, came suddenly

upon him, bringing him the most pressing entreaties from various places, especially from Birmingham and South Durham ; for the latter of which places his return was represented to be all but certain. To a mind like his, earnestly devoted to a great public object, such applications could not but be deeply agitating. Feeling his own bodily weakness on the one hand, he yet felt a great desire, on the other, to lift up again, if possible, his voice in Parliament, in defence of the rights of the poor. The conflict was most injurious to him. He felt it his duty finally to decide upon remaining in private life ; but the mental struggle visibly added to his rapidly-advancing indisposition.

This circumstance, coupled with his constant application to study, and neglect of exercise, soon brought on an entire derangement of the digestive organs ; which naturally operated to the increase of the former alarming symptoms, and a dropsical swelling of the extremities began to shew itself. He was now settled at the New Lodge ; but the difficulty of breathing had so increased, as to render the exertion of going up stairs painful ; and for the remaining weeks of his life his sleep was taken in an apartment on the ground-floor.

A sudden attack of inflammation of the heart

shortly after came on ; and, although it quickly yielded to the usual remedies, it left him so much reduced in strength, and so little able to bear up against his previous and still-remaining ailments, that a settled persuasion now began to take possession of his mind, that the end of his life drew near. Nor could any temporary relief, which again and again was afforded, remove this conviction from his mind.

We now see Mr. Sadler, then, in those circumstances which nearly all men expect and calculate upon being placed in at some time or other ; but which, in point of fact, come upon very few. Almost every man looks forward to a period when he shall feel and know that death is near, and shall be able to make up his “ dread account,” before the hour for giving it in arrives. But how few, how very few, do ever, in point of fact, realize such a position ! How preponderating the proportion of those who are taken off by sudden death, or in delirium, or who are deluded into the belief, even up to the last moment, that they are about to recover, and not to die. Mr. Sadler, however, was one of the very few, who, long before his death, felt a firm conviction, that he “ should die, and not live ; ” and whose mind was so unclouded, up to the last, as to enable him rightly to examine into both the end before him, and his own preparation for it.

We have already seen, that from his very boyhood he had been made acquainted with the great realities of religion ; and there is abundant evidence that, at various periods of his life, he deeply felt their truth and importance.

Many of his private diaries, during his residence at Leeds, in the middle portion of his life, have come under our notice, and a very large proportion of their pages is occupied with reflections and remarks on religious topics, which were evidently meant for no eye but his own.

It is not, however, to be denied, that the vehemence of his disposition, during the few years of his public life, and the earnest sincerity with which his whole soul was thrown into the philanthropic plans he had formed, led him to pursue his various objects in parliament with so great an absorption of mind, as to leave too little room, during this period, for quiet reflection or occupation on still higher topics.

But the solemn pause now graciously accorded to him, previously to his departure, did not find him, like many others, either uninformed or unconvinced, as to the all-important truths of Christianity. All that he needed was their faithful application to his own case ; and in this, “ the patient ministered to himself,” with no deceptive or reluctant hand.

The last few months of his life were spent in a self-examination and repentance the most deep, self-abasing, and fervent. An excellent clergyman who constantly visited him, often exclaimed, that "he went to learn, not to teach."

Doubtless there will be many, among those into whose hands this volume may fall, who will ask, with unfeigned surprise, what there was to call for such penitential grief and self-condemnation, in the case of one whose life, to human view, had been spotless ; and whose chief object and pursuit, almost to a fault, had been, the improvement of the condition of his fellow-creatures ? But we have already described Mr. Sadler as one who sought after truth, with a laborious and honest endeavour. Such an one could hardly remain under the influence of the baseless and irrational notions by which, it is to be feared, great numbers of men delude themselves.

He could not, for instance, like many others, rest on a vague and indefinite idea of "the mercy of God ;" and yet neglect the study of that Revelation which God has himself given to man, for the express purpose of informing him in what way the Divine mercy is bestowed.

Nor could he, with the word of God in his hand, still continue, like multitudes, to disbelieve the positive declarations therein contained,

—that a state of fearful wretchedness awaits, in the next life, those who have not laid hold upon God's mercy, in His own appointed way, in this.

Neither was he likely, with this mirror of truth before him, to adopt another false hope, too frequently relied upon, by those who are but half-awakened to their real state;—namely, that against some indefinite amount of sins, which they will admit that they have committed,—God will place their good deeds and charitable actions; and that, finally, the atoning sacrifice of the Great Mediator will suffice to balance the account.

His mind, as we have already said, had been too accurately informed, from youth, to permit him to take shelter in any of these “refuges of lies.” He knew the language of the Church of England, which he had been in the habit of using, to be strictly true:—That he “had from time to time committed manifold sins and wickedness; “provoking most justly God's wrath against “him:” *—while even his best works, “could not “put away his sins, or endure the severity of God's “judgment.” † Thus “the remembrance of his “sins became grievous to him; and the burden of “them intolerable;” ‡ and it was only by being enabled to appropriate to himself, by faith,

* Communion Service.

† Art. xii.

‡ Communion Service.

the meritorious efficacy of “the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice,” made upon the Cross, that he finally “found rest for his soul.”

His sole occupation during all this period, was of a character suited to his circumstances. The Scriptures were seldom out of his hand ; his conversation was filled with the *one topic* ; and earnest and vehement prayer absorbed him day and night. That his petitions were indeed heard and answered, became apparent to his afflicted relatives, by several unequivocal signs. Among these we may specify,—

1. A perfect calmness, and indifference to things which had for many years past almost monopolized his thoughts. As one instance of this may be mentioned, a fresh and very earnest application for permission to use his name as a candidate for a large borough in a midland county of England. The application was not only declined on the instant,—which, indeed, was a matter of course ; but it was put aside without a single sigh, or so much as a quickening of the pulse.

2. Having always been of an impetuous and irritable temperament, the silent endurance of pain had never been a feature in his character in former years. Now, however, although ease wholly forsook him, and his sufferings were constant and unremitting, his patient endurance was quite re-

markable, and his mind seemed swallowed up by a feeling, that all his pains were infinitely less than his deservings; and by an intense desire to realize that interest in the greater and truly availing sufferings of the Saviour, which might enable him to exclaim, with the apostle's exulting confidence, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

3. Another most evident and remarkable change took place in him. When in health, the confidence he felt in the truth of his own principles, and the vehemence with which he maintained them, constantly led him to speak of his opponents, especially of those who had written "against the poor," in terms of unsparing severity. It was not any personal feeling which prompted this; he merely adopted too dogmatically, the language applied in holy writ, to the oppressors of the poor and the needy. But now a total change took place in this respect. The greatest meekness and gentleness displayed itself, whenever opposing controversialists were alluded to; and he was quite as ready to find an exculpatory plea or charitable supposition, as he had formerly been to hurl anathemas at "the enemies of the poor."

By these and other equally significant tokens,

evidence was abundantly given, of a real and rapidly-progressive work of Divine grace in the heart.

In the month of July (1835,) a sudden rally took place, and he appeared for a time decidedly better ; his worst symptoms abated ; he was able to sit up during part of the day ; and for a moment the hopes of his friends revived. But this pleasing prospect disappeared as suddenly as it had sprung up ; a relapse came on, aggravated by the additional symptom of constant and violent sickness, which quickly reduced him to the lowest state of exhaustion. Two days of this suffering, Friday and Saturday, July 24 and 25, brought him evidently to the last extremity. On Sunday and Monday he remained nearly speechless. On the Tuesday morning he himself, and his friends, alike prepared for a close which all hourly expected. Whenever not dozing, he was engaged in earnest prayer. Towards evening he appeared gradually sinking away ; but about three o'clock on the Wednesday morning, he a little revived, and recovered sensation and speech. One of his watching friends earnestly asked, " If he felt the presence of God, supporting him in this hour of need ?" He instantly replied, " I know that my Redeemer liveth ; and " that though in my flesh worms destroy this body, " yet with mine eyes shall I behold him ; whom I " shall see for myself and not another, though my

“reins be consumed within me.” His friend replied, by quoting the promise, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee.” He gratefully acknowledged the faithfulness of God, adding, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me, and Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”

He then, in a few broken sentences, most touchingly expressed his sense of his own utter unworthiness, and his entire dependence on the atoning sacrifice of the great Propitiator; adding a verse of a favourite hymn;

“Take my poor heart, and let it be
“ For ever closed to all but Thee;
“ Seal Thou my breast, and let me wear
“ That pledge of love for ever there.”

These were almost the last syllables he uttered; for he shortly afterwards sunk into a doze, and gradually passed away; expiring about six o'clock on the morning of the 29th of July, being then in the 56th year of his age.

“On Tuesday, August 4, the remains of this inestimable man were interred in Ballylesson churchyard. The gentry, and an immense number of

the respectable inhabitants of Belfast and the surrounding country, evinced their respect for his memory, by accompanying him to the grave. After the service, a most impressive sermon was preached by the Rev. Thomas Drew." *

On the 13th of August a public meeting was held in Leeds, Henry Hall, Esq. (the senior alderman,) in the chair, for the purpose of adopting such measures as might be thought appropriate, to express the respect and attachment felt for his memory, by his former fellow-townsmen and friends. At this meeting, after agreeing to several Resolutions of condolence and regret, a subscription was set on foot, to which the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Lonsdale, Lord Feversham, the Hon. W. Duncombe, and Mr. Fountayne Wilson became contributors, and which speedily amounted to about £ 700, for the erection of a statue of Mr. Sadler in the parish church of Leeds. The work was committed to the care of Mr. Park ; and it now stands at the entrance of the splendid new church lately raised in that town ; bearing the following inscription :

* *Belfast Guardian*, Aug, 8, 1835.

MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER, F.R.S.

BORN AT DOVERIDGE, IN THE COUNTY OF DERBY,
FROM EARLY YOUTH AN INHABITANT OF THIS TOWN ;

ENDOWED WITH GREAT NATURAL TALENTS,
A FERVID IMAGINATION, A FEELING HEART, AND AN INQUIRING MIND :
HE CULTIVATED WITH SUCCESS AMID THE DISTRACTIONS OF
TRADE,

THE ELEGANCIES OF POLITE LITERATURE,
AND THE SEVERER STUDY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ECONOMY,
AS EXHIBITED IN HIS WORKS ON IRELAND AND ON THE
LAW OF POPULATION.

THE DISPLAY, ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS,
OF A COPIOUS ELOQUENCE PECULIARLY HIS OWN,
IN DEFENCE OF THE PROTESTANT FAITH,
OF THE RIGHTS OF HUMANITY, AND OF THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION,
SECURED HIM, UNSOUGHT FOR, A SEAT IN THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS ;

AND HE REPRESENTED THE BOROUGH OF NEWARK
AND ALDBOROUGH IN THREE SUCCESSIVE PARLIAMENTS :

HE DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF IN THE SENATE
AS THE BOLD DEFENDER OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIS COUNTRY,
AND BY STRENUOUSLY ADVOCATING MEASURES TO
SECURE A LEGAL PROVISION FOR THE

POOR OF IRELAND,
AND THE AMELIORATION OF THE CONDITION OF
FACTORY CHILDREN.

HE DIED AT BELFAST, JULY 29, 1835,
AGED 55 YEARS.
HIS REMAINS REST IN BALLYLESSON CHURCH-YARD.

BY HIS NUMEROUS PRIVATE AND POLITICAL FRIENDS
THIS MONUMENT HAS BEEN ERECTED,
TO HAND DOWN TO POSTERITY THE NAME OF
A SCHOLAR, A PATRIOT, AND A PRACTICAL PHILANTHROPIST.

Having thus brought our narrative to a close, it will naturally be expected that we should attempt a brief sketch of the leading points in Mr. Sadler's character. In discharging this part of our duty, we shall confine ourselves, in this place, to what may be considered his *personal* character; reserving for a concluding chapter, the consideration of his System,—those leading principles of national economy, which it was the great object of his life to inculcate.

Turning, then, to the recollection of Mr. Sadler *as a man*, apart from the great truths of which he was the unwearied advocate, we shall first advert,—desiring to speak the *whole* truth,—to the blemishes and defects, which, in the course of a friendship and personal intercourse of nearly ten years, presented themselves to our notice. To slur over this part of the subject, would neither consist with our sense of propriety and truth, nor with our views of sound policy. We know of no other safe way of handling any subject, than that of frankly admitting and setting down all the facts of the case.

Nor need we fear, in the present instance, to make the fullest and most explicit admissions. Had we not valued and revered the character of Mr. Sadler as an honest and upright and earnest man, as well as a profound and intelligent one, this Memoir would never have been commenced. But,

entertaining that conviction in the fullest degree, why should we hesitate to state in the plainest language, the few points which we could have sometimes wished to have been otherwise? We are not professing to paint “a faultless monster whom the world ne’er saw ;” but a genuine, and necessarily imperfect specimen of humanity.

The main drawback to his acceptability and usefulness, then, was one which arose out of the circumstances in which he had been placed for the first five-and-forty years of his life. It was well indicated by one of the most accurate observers in the old House of Commons, Sir James Mackintosh. In the spring of 1829, when the eclat of Mr. Sadler’s first appearance in that assembly brought his name and pretensions into daily discussion in every society, Mr. Zachary Macaulay, happening to meet this veteran critic and orator, immediately put the question, “This Mr. Sadler, whom all “men are talking about, what sort of a man is “he, Sir James?—What is your opinion of him? “Why,” replied Sir James, “there is no doubt “that he is a great man ; but he appears to me “*to have been used to a favourable auditory.*”

Sir James had here, with an intuitive sagacity, both hinted at the defects in Mr. Sadler’s mode of address, and had suggested most truly their real cause and origin. Unlike such men as

Canning, and Brougham, and Peel, who were brought, as youths, upon the noblest arena in the world, and forced to train themselves, cautiously, and step by step, in the presence of the Nestors of the senate, until all exuberances were pruned away, all weaknesses remedied, and a style formed by practice, exactly suited to the place and the auditory; unlike, we repeat, these happier competitors, Mr. Sadler dwelt and moved, until mature age, amidst the society of men who were, almost universally, his inferiors both in mental powers and acquirements. It was impossible that this circumstance should fail to produce an injurious effect. He became accustomed, as a matter of right, and of course, to declaim, to lecture, to expatiate. On every side he grew accustomed to meet the gaze of admiring and delighted auditors; but scarcely ever had he the advantage of grappling with an equal. It cannot be necessary to dilate on this point; or to explain or prove, what every man of discernment will see at a glance, that an education and training of this kind was a most unfavourable and disadvantageous preparation for such an arena as the House of Commons. But our remark is not limited to that place; it extends to the whole circle of Mr. Sadler's public life. He was not conceited, nor dictatorial; but he was often declamatory, and fre-

quently prolix ; not indeed with the dull prolixity of mere verbiage, but with the redundance of a full and almost overcharged mind, pouring itself forth without dread of causing weariness or offence.

A second source of weakness was one of very unusual occurrence. It was, the singular *transparency* of his character. So guileless was he,—so fearless in his honesty of purpose, that he was constantly in the habit of “ thinking aloud ; ” and many were the difficulties and dilemmas in which this practice involved him. One well-known attack of a disappointed aspirant, who revenged himself for a fancied slight, by sending divers libels to the newspapers, was based almost wholly upon the advantage afforded him by this singular practice. The man who said that “ Language was “ given us for the purpose of concealing our “ thoughts,” was just at the very antipodes (in morals,) to Mr. Sadler. All who were familiar with him would attest, that the concealment of *his* thoughts “ would have been impossible had “ it been attempted ; and would have been foolish, “ had it been possible.” He lived in London, among the wily diplomatists, the scheming partizans, and the brilliant but insincere devotees of fashion,—himself the greatest contrast to them all ; a simple-hearted, earnest, and uncompromising enthusiast. We have called this a drawback, and

so, in one sense, it proved. The sagacious policy which is indicated by the saying, "If I had both "my hands full of truths, I would open but one "finger at a time," would more effectually have served his high and noble ends. But it was not in his nature ; to have attempted it, would, as we have just said, have been "foolish"; still the absence of it was a weakness and an imperfection.

But now, having honestly noticed these two points, in which his friends often longed for a change, we come to the more important and leading features of his character. And here, to speak the truth in the simplest and plainest language, is to furnish his best eulogy.

The leading characteristic of his mind,—that which was always, and on all occasions, apparent,—was that of *a seeker after truth*.

Much intercourse with him, continued through several years ; marked by the greatest confidence ; and including within its range almost every conceivable topic,—enables us to testify, that whatever might be the subject in hand, however involving party connections, or political or religious prejudices ;—never could even a suspicion enter, that Mr. Sadler was opposing or evading what he knew to be the truth ; or that he followed any other pole-star than that of sincere conviction. Frequent differences of opinion might and did

arise ; and long and warm might the contention grow ; but never could it be for an instant doubted, that what he was maintaining so strenuously, he believed most firmly.

But he was more than this ; he not only sought after truth,—but he sought after it *most perseveringly* and *most laboriously*.

There are many men who mean honestly ; but do not feel a sufficient interest in finding out the truth, to toil and weary themselves much in its discovery. But Mr. Sadler's whole life was a life of labour,—not for wealth, or aggrandisement, or party triumph,—but for the discovery and vindication of *truth*. Nor was it the mere delight of a controversialist, in maintaining the theory which he happens to have espoused ;—the prevalent motive which urged Mr. Sadler forward, through toilsome days and sleepless nights, was a deep conviction that the truths he desired to assert, were truths essentially connected with the welfare of his fellow-countrymen. The amelioration of their condition was the object at which he aimed ; and the accomplishment of this object, in any degree, would have been considered by him a full and ample reward.

The *unvarying, unyielding devotion* of his whole soul to these labours, formed another remarkable feature in his character. What multitudes of

public men do we behold, who take up a matter of national concern for a time; and labour as if their hearts were really engaged in the cause;—but, return to the field at the end of some two or three years; and enquire for those who seemed so earnest in the people's interest; and where will they be found? Some, wearied and cast down by the toilsome character and apparent hopelessness of the undertaking; others, carried away by some new fancy; and a few, submitting to the welcome fetters of official bondage. Only now and then,—only once or twice in a century,—do we meet with men, who, like Wilberforce and Sadler, take up a question from heartfelt conviction, and adhere to it, through evil report and good report, while life or hope or even possibility of success remains.

The main secret of this untiring and devoted perseverance, is, a real and solid *disinterestedness*. These men have taken up the cause, not as a means of distinguishing or elevating themselves; nor merely as an occupation for leisure hours; but from a deep conviction of its real importance—of its *higher* importance than party interests, or their own personal advantage. Hence, if temptations are thrown in their way, the natural reply is, “You can offer nothing that will bear any comparison, in my view, with the business which I have in

hand.”* In Mr. Sadler’s case this disregard of party and personal considerations was pre-eminently conspicuous. Before he had been two full years in Parliament, the greatest controversy of modern times sprang up. The question of the Reform Bill was, in fact, the question of a *New Constitution*. Now, there were not five men in the House of Commons who were Mr. Sadler’s equals, in a large and accurate acquaintance with this whole question. He was also, at all times, a ready and powerful speaker. To have taken a conspicuous part in this mighty struggle would have been to ensure himself a foremost place in a Conservative government, whenever his party might be recalled to office. Why, then, was it, that Mr. Sadler, after the first encounter, did far less than might have been expected of him, in this momentous controversy? It was because he had already entered upon the business in which his heart felt the deepest interest—the advocacy of the rights of the poor; and, from this great object, neither party sympathies nor the prospects of ambition could prevail to lure him away. He left the mere party-men to contend for

* The reader’s mind will naturally revert to a recent instance of this rare virtue, displayed by Mr. Sadler’s noble successor,—*noble*, indeed, in every sense,—in the advocacy of the cause of the poor factory-children.

their nomination-boroughs; while he gave his days and nights to a desperate struggle in behalf of the poor little factory-slaves.

Nor was he at all ignorant or indifferent to the sacrifices he was thus making. He knew that by adopting this course, he was injuring all his prospects as a politician. He was well aware that the subjects on which he loved to dwell, were tiresome to the "honourable house;" that he himself would be voted "a bore," and his influence in that assembly all but destroyed. He saw, also, that the leaders of his own party disliked being forced to vote on such questions; "committing themselves," if they voted in the affirmative; and incurring unpopularity if they voted otherwise. Even his own expectations of a seat in the new Parliament were almost destroyed by the very line he took; arousing, as it did, the enmity of the mill-owners—the most powerful class among the new constituencies. All these obvious dangers he braved, simply because he was *thoroughly in earnest*; and had made his choice, deliberately, either to remain a public man with the power of doing good; or not to remain a public man at all.

The truth was, that his heart was in the task to which he had devoted himself. It was, with him, no pet theory merely; but a grand, absorbing object. How truly devoted he was to it; how

absolutely enthusiastic ; how deeply in earnest ; only those could tell who were in the habit of associating with him in his more retired hours. It was then that his whole soul was poured forth without reserve ; and he would dilate upon wrongs that he had seen inflicted, and sorrows which he had tried to assuage ; till, often, utterance was stopped by emotion, and fears for the narrator overpowered the interest felt in the narration itself.

To compare such a man with the speculating statesmen of modern times,—the Sheridans, the Plunketts, the Cannings, would be simply absurd. He had no more resemblance to them than a loyal patriot leader bears to a “soldier of fortune ;”—a Collingwood, for instance, to a Bonaparte. In mere *talent*—the machinery only, the “steam-power” of the character,—he might be exceeded by some of this class ; but in *moral worth* and intrinsic value, the inspiring genius of the whole, he rises to a far higher sphere.

It is to be feared that the time has hardly yet arrived, for the full and just appreciation of such a character. There is still too much, among us, of the idolatry of mere *talent*, and of admiration called forth by *success*, without regard to the means employed, or the personal worth of the successful gladiator. Higher and sounder principles, which,

it may be hoped, are quietly growing and extending themselves, will wean us from this childish fondness for glittering tinsel, this vulgar delight in dragging the car of whomsoever may happen to be victor. Is it not humiliating to witness earnest and sincere men, often assisting to raise to the pinnacle of fame and power, one who, in private converse, they freely admit to be nothing more than a selfish and ambitious schemer, advocating, perhaps, for the moment, *their* views, because such a course tends to *his own* advancement? Yet how often, within the last forty years, has this been a matter of notorious occurrence! How often have public leaders been vehemently and pertinaciously supported, who possessed not the respect or confidence of one in twenty of their professed followers. A most revolting instance of this, is, at the present moment, passing before the public eye. The very latest number of the leading Whig journal, deliberately adopts the following language:—

“ While the present policy of the government is dictated by motives so childish, it is in vain for them to devise schemes of permanent operation and utility (for Ireland). All will be frustrated by the opposition of *the one person* who now, and most naturally, wields alone the entire confidence of the people who he has elevated into a nation. And we shall think such plans as the one now

before us worthy of serious support, when we find the proposal of them preceded by *the conciliation of the only man* who can give them a chance of being carried into effect.”*

It is impossible to help suspecting that advice like this is only tendered in the Satanic view, of tempting your opponent to that which you know would prove his sure destruction. The two main causes of the recent downfall of the Whigs, undoubtedly were—their refusal to do anything for the great mass of the people; and their base and despicable pandering to O’Connell. And their present policy—the motive for which is obvious enough,—seems to be, to encourage and persuade, as much as possible, the Conservative government to follow in their footsteps—by maintaining the New Poor Law—by refusing protection to the infant-labourers in our factories,—and above all, by cringing to the universally despised and abhorred Irish mendicant.

The manœuvre is perhaps too gross; and any set of men, calling themselves statesmen, who could be entrapped by it, would fall, not only right speedily, but without a single voice to regret their overthrow. We do trust, however, that the progress of religion, and of a higher tone of

* *Edinburgh Review*, Jan. 1842, p. 496.

morals among us, will gradually elevate the current sentiment of society in these matters. And, whenever the time arrives, of the prevalence of a thoroughly correct and healthy mode of estimating character; not by mere talent or power, but by moral principle and elevation of purpose,—then will the names of such men as Mr. Sadler receive that degree of honour which justly belongs to so rare a union of both.

Thus much of the distinguishing features of his character. Of the rest, it may suffice to say, that he was an amiable and accomplished man; exemplary in every relation in life; beloved as much as he was admired. Both as a poet* and as a musician, he held a high rank. He was a fascinating as well as an improving companion; possessing a great variety of attainments, in languages, science, and the arts; without the alloy of either pedantry or conceit. But these are commendations which, happily, may be bestowed on many men, who are still not gifted with the higher and nobler attributes which distinguished the character of MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER.

* For some specimens of his Version of the Psalms, see *Appendix* (F.)

CHAPTER XVII.

SUMMARY OF MR. SADLER'S SYSTEM.

THE history of the Life of Michael Thomas Sadler has been, of necessity, the history of his opinions ; in fact, it was chiefly to assert and maintain his system, that this Memoir was undertaken. It would be wrong, however, to confound him with the swarm of theorizers of the present day ; who frame schemes of political economy for lack of other occupation, and would fain, if they were able, play at chess with mankind. There never was a simpler, more earnest, or more strictly practical mind, than that of Mr. Sadler. The idea of building up a system never entered his head. His plans were suggested, one after the other, by the errors and necessities which he saw around him ; and thus, gradually, matured by years, and confirmed by experience, the whole results of a life spent in

patient investigation and earnest reflection, moulded and formed themselves into something of a systematic form.

His first steps, in early life, were taken in the safest of all paths, reverence for, and implicit belief in, God's word ; and pity for the poor. Proceeding in this course, observing and comparing all he saw around him, he soon began to be penetrated with concern at the workings of cupidity and selfishness on every side ; in some cases visible in the neglect, in others in the oppression of the poor : but most especially did he abhor that reigning theory of the day, which inculcated hardness of heart upon principle, nay, as a positive duty.

Constant thought and laborious researches into the question, soon fixed in his mind a firm and rooted attachment to the old English system of care for the poor ; and a thorough detestation of the modern opposers and contemners of that system,—the Malthuses, Martineaus, Marcets, *et hoc genus omne*. But he was too wise and too honest a man to condemn any theory from mere impulse or antipathy : hence his well-grounded aversion, (well-grounded because originating in the Divine word,) led him into a deep and earnest investigation of all those assumed facts, upon which the Malthusian theory claimed to be founded.

1. One by one, with ceaseless toil, but indomi-

table perseverance, he tracked each fallacy or fabrication to its source, and finally left no one principal or important fact in all Mr. Malthus's statements undemolished. He shewed that the grand fallacy of the whole, (the two ratios, Geometrical and Arithmetical,) was a dream, destitute of even a semblance of reality: That the assertion, that population always *followed* production, was the reverse of the fact: That the alleged increase of population in America, which was said to be "irrespective of immigration," was, in fact, *caused by immigration*: That the representations of misery in China, arising from over-population, were contradicted by all the best and latest authorities:*

* Ever since Mr. Sadler's death, and up to the present hour, all kinds of confirmation continue to flow in from every quarter, to the truth of his system. Witness the latest accounts of the Chinese empire. China was Mr. Malthus's favourite instance of the misery inseparable from a crowded population. But what is the fact, as attested by the best witnesses in the present day? Listen to one of the most recent:—

"Care-worn and half-starved faces are rare things in China. A plumpness of feature, cheerfulness of mein, and a gait full of animation, bespeak a condition of mind that looks on to-day's supply with complacency, and forward to to-morrow's chances without apprehension. The happiness and general prosperity of the Chinese are conspicuous."—*The Chinese as they are*. By G. Tradescant Lay. London, 1841, p. 260.

Yet Mr. Lay does not deny the fact of the crowded population of China. On the contrary, he traces its prosperity and happiness *to this very fact*, as a principal cause.

That the doublings of population in certain countries, said to have actually taken place, were palpable and monstrous impossibilities, as the least examination made manifest : That the postponement of marriages does *not* tend to lessen population in the way, or to the extent alleged : And that the early marriages, laid to the charge of our poor, do not, in fact, take place ; nor do they, when occurring, augment population as supposed. In short, as we have already observed, absolutely encumbering his work with the multiplicity of his well-established facts, he left no single material assertion in Mr. Malthus's two octavo volumes, in existence. The whole fabric was reduced to a shapeless mass of ruins and rubbish.

2. We have here anticipated the appearance of his great work, in 1830, and have spoken of the labour as in substance completed several years before. He had matured his views, and established the main principles of his theory, when he first came forward in 1825, and enunciated his leading views in public, in his Lectures on the English Poor Laws. In those papers, the manuscript of which now lies before us, the rough outline, in all its leading features, of his whole system, is easily discernible.

3. His next step was occasioned by the circumstances of the times, which brought the state of

Ireland frequently and prominently under discussion. As the establishment of the rights of humanity in that country, and the consequent relief of England and Scotland from the burden of Irish mendicity, were points on which he had formed a clear opinion, and felt very deeply interested ; he was induced to turn aside, for awhile, and to detach a portion of his general scheme of national economy, to take its share in the general discussion. That the most complete success attended this effort, is sufficiently proved by the fact, that up to the year 1827 scarcely a voice dared to make itself heard on the affirmative side of the question ; and yet in 1838 we find a Poor Law established by Parliament in Ireland, to the wonder of many who doubted how so great a change could have been so rapidly brought about.

4. Returning from this excursion, Mr. Sadler resumed his main employment, and in a short time completed the grand labour of his life,—the work which destroyed Malthusianism as an acknowledged and defended system. Individuals will doubtless still be met with, who continue to cling to the defunct abomination ; but as the creed of a party the mischief is extinct. In 1825, it ruled and reigned ; and its disciples vaunted its immortality :—in 1835, “ I sought for it, and it could not be found ; and the place thereof shall know it no more.”

5. Having now established his main and central

position, and having been raised to a seat in the Legislature, Mr. Sadler began immediately to trace out and exhibit the necessary and natural results of his system. Resolutely maintaining the justice and policy, in all times and in all countries, of a law for the relief of the indigent poor;—it followed of necessity that the very first step to be taken, was, to insist on justice being done to Ireland in this matter. Nor was it only for *her own sake*, that Ireland required this application of an immutable principle;—the disorganization of England could never be effectually remedied, until the two islands were placed on one footing in this respect. The market for labour must necessarily be constantly and seriously encumbered in England, so long as no refuge against starvation existed in Ireland. Hence it became absolutely indispensable, before any cure for England's domestic evils could hopefully be applied,—that this burden should be taken off. Mr. Sadler, therefore, having first established his case to demonstration in his work on Ireland; now laid his arguments before parliament; returned again to the attack, on the following year, carrying the question to a division; and, defeated only by an exceedingly narrow majority, had still the consolation, in his retirement, to see the cause go forward, by its own momentum; and thus was enabled calmly and hopefully to anticipate the inevitable, and in fact, speedy result, of its entire success.

6. Having given the needful impetus to this great work of national justice and civilization, Mr. Sadler felt now at liberty to proceed onwards in the task to which he had devoted all the powers of his mind ;—The redress of the wrongs, and the improvement of the condition,—of the great mass of the labouring population of England.

This task naturally divided itself into two leading heads ; although minor divisions, and subsidiary points, often came into view. The *agricultural* labourers, and those employed in *manufactures*, embraced a very great proportion of the English poor ; and almost the entire of those in whose condition Mr. Sadler saw so much to lament and to remedy. Not that he was ignorant of much that was to be deplored, among our mining districts, among various departments of trade in London, and in other isolated branches of industry. But, without forgetting these, it was clearly right first to deal with those two great leading classes by whose wrongs more than half of our whole population was injured ; and by whose deliverance, more than half of the entire mass would be benefited. Rightly, therefore, did he commence his labours, by bringing forward plans for ameliorating the condition of the *agricultural* and the *manufacturing* poor.

The latter of these two happened to occupy the

larger portion of his time, during his last year in parliament; and this circumstance, which was quite unpremeditated on his part, has given his labours somewhat of a party aspect; and made him appear like the promoter of a case *against* the mill-owners, and therefore *for* the agriculturists. Nothing, however, was further from his own views or wishes. Few things, we believe, would have pained him more, than to have seen these great questions, so involving the well-being of the people, used as mere party-engines to rally tories against whigs, or whigs against tories. It may not be easy to form an opinion at this moment, as to *which* of these great branches of industry he would have pronounced to be *most* defiled by abuses and corruptions;—but there is no danger in affirming most confidently, that his deep and well-grounded conviction was, that among *both* these classes,—the agricultural and manufacturing labourers, great evils, and most cruel oppressions, did most extensively, and to the imminent peril of the state, prevail.

His own choice led him first to take up the case of the Agricultural Poor. Circumstances, indeed, especially the urgent pressure of various friends, induced him soon after to bring before parliament the case of the infant-labourers in factories; and this question, once opened, soon threw the former

subject into the shade. A real and earnest struggle was commenced, for the improvement of the Factory-system ; and in this contention the preceding topic has been, for the time, forgotten ; but no such preference was dictated by Mr. Sadler's own mind. He was truly impartial in this matter ; constantly asserting the existence of great evils and fearful wrongs in both departments ; and quite as ready to struggle for the amelioration of the one class, as of the other.

We have felt the more desirous that this should be explicitly understood ; because we have recently observed instances of a disposition to deal with these topics in a party spirit ;—putting forward the miseries of the factory-labourers as an argument, (not indeed without some force,) against those who would make the manufacturing system the main reliance of the nation :—and, this view, again, met by recriminatory statements of the hardships of the agricultural poor ; intended to shew that the Corn Laws conferred no boon of comfort on the labourer. Little practical benefit is to be expected from reasonings conducted in this spirit. The unquestionable truth is, that selfish cupidity has long been at work, and is now incessantly and remorseless engaged, alike among farmers and mill-owners, in bearing down the poor ; in warring against the independence and

comfort of the workman ; in reducing him as much as possible to the condition of a serf ;—or, which is worse, to the state of a “ roundsman,”—to be made use of when wanted ; and sent to the work-house when not wanted ; but to be *cared for, not at all !*

Mr. Sadler's earlier years were spent among the agricultural poor ; and for them his warmest sympathies were excited. He saw them, even within the thirty or forty years of his own period, continually losing ground before the encroachments of the classes immediately above them. Their very dwellings were grudged them ; and a general but silent warfare against cottages was carried on ; while all occupation of land, even to the little patch of garden-ground, was generally withdrawn. The enclosures deprived them of their commons, without even the shew of compensation. The advance of the manufacturing system rendered the former home-employments of their wives and daughters almost unprofitable. Increasing hordes of Irish labourers deprived them of the advantages of the harvest-season ; and machinery took their places on the barn-floor. Then came in the “ select vestry,” and the “ roundsman ” system ; and thus, at last, the poor farm-labourer, in many parts of the country, was reduced, not merely to poverty, but to the most utter helplessness and

hopelessness ;—to a state, indeed, so necessarily reckless, as to render poaching, or rick-burning, or any other kind of warfare on the rich, just the fittest sort of temptation to his state of mind.

And, while he saw these fearful and still increasing evils, he saw, also, that the short-sighted selfishness which produced them, could neither plead the temptation of immediate gain, nor the urgency of paramount necessity. In one particular instance referred to, the facts of which were given with praiseworthy care, by the estimable Vicar of Alford,* the cottage-destroying, pauper-making system had raised the poor-rates of 15 parishes, lying within the range of his inquiry, from £1120 7s. 8d. per annum, to £6296 6s. 3d. We give a few of the particulars ; collected by this clergyman in his own vicinity:—

HUTTOFT.

Cottages demolished between 1770 and 1830	.	.	29
Cottages built between 1770 and 1830	.	.	0
Poor and County Rate, 1774	.	.	£95 15 1
Ditto 1830	.	.	511 15 11

BILSBY.

Cottages demolished between 1770 and 1830	.	.	10
Cottages built between 1770 and 1830	.	.	1
Poor Rate, 1770	.	.	£69 11 4
Ditto 1830	.	.	550 10 4

* *The Causes of Pauperism and Distress.* By the Rev. E. Dawson, Vicar of Alford.

ALFORD.

Cottages demolished between 1770 and 1830	.	.	11
Cottages built between 1770 and 1830	.	.	0
Poor Rates, 1770	.	.	£96 17 7
Ditto 1830	.	.	1003 1 6

MALTBY-LE-MARSH.

Cottages demolished between 1770 and 1830	.	.	9
Cottages built in same period	.	.	1
Poor Rates, 1770	.	.	£19 19 7
Ditto 1830	.	.	234 8 3

WITHERN.

Cottages demolished between 1770 and 1830	.	.	15
Cottages built in same period	.	.	0
Poor Rates, 1770	.	.	£31 18 9
Ditto 1830	.	.	407 16 2

We have here selected five out of fifteen, not to be tiresome to our readers. But the general result of the 15 parishes shewed—

Cottages demolished	.	175
Cottages built	.	12

The population meanwhile, having *increased* from 4000 to 6000, and the poor-rates having been more than *quintupled* !

Now, seeing that this folly, as cruel as it was senseless, was still proceeding in all parts of the country, surely it was time, as Mr. Sadler proposed, for the Legislature seriously and vigorously to interfere.

Nor could there be any rational doubt or difficulty as to the remedy. The same gentleman who has just shown us both the lamentable fact, and its results, of the cottage-destroying system, shall now, in the briefest and simplest style, exhibit to us the happiness and prosperity which that system has in a great measure destroyed, but which it is perfectly possible to restore.

“ William Houlden, of Rigsby, near Alford, aged 55 years, occupies a cottage, with suitable appurtenances, and 10*a.* 2*r.* 26*p.* of land attached thereto, belonging, as owner, to Miss Manners of Bloxholm, at the yearly rent of 10*l.* 10*s.* His ancestors and himself have occupied the same cottage for more than a century: three acres of the land are of very inferior quality, the rest good. He applies about a rood and a half to gardening purposes. The rent has always been punctually paid. But on two occasions a whole half-year's rent was returned to him. This was done in consideration of some severe losses among his live-stock. The rent averages what is paid by the farmers in the same parish. His usual employment is working for the farmers or in the neighbouring woods. His wife has borne him eleven children, ten of whom are now living. Four are in respectable services, or otherwise able to provide for themselves. He has for a long time supported, and still supports, in

decency and comfort, a worthy mother now bending beneath the load of eighty-one years. This man, who has had a family of ten children to rear, only four of whom are able to provide for themselves, and an aged mother to support, *never once received parochial relief*. Some time ago the churchwarden of Rigsby observed to me, ‘that if there was an honest man in the world, Will Houlden was.’ ” *

But this, it may be said, is merely an isolated case: take, then, a whole parish:—

“The parish of Raithby, near Spilsby, contains 1149 acres, and 175 inhabitants. The expenditure in the year 1832, on account of the poor, was £126. 9s. 1d. being about 2s. 1³d. per pound on a rack-rent rate of about £1180. This parish contains four cottages having not less than one rood, but under five acres; eleven having five acres, but under ten: four having ten acres, but under fifteen; total, nineteen. The rent averages, or is not more, than what is paid by the farmers in the same parish. Mr. John Hobson, of Raithby, to whose kindness I am indebted for this information, remarks in his letter now before me. “With respect to my own observations on the cottage-system, I must beg leave to say, that the comfort of

* Dawson’s *Causes of Pauperism*, p. 3, 4.

the lower class of society in Raithby is entirely to be attributed to that system. I can assure you (being one of the largest occupiers in the parish) from my own observation, *the benefit is incalculable.*" I shall only add, that the observant traveller, who may chance to pass through the village of Raithby, can hardly fail, while marking the modest unpretending neatness of these time-honoured cottages and their premises (the best *index* of comfort within), to be impressed with a sentiment alike favourable to the owner, and the occupiers of the property. The very moderate rates of the parish of Raithby, notwithstanding the number of its cottages, go far to refute the heartless doctrine, that cottages aggravate the poor-rates."*

We may add to this testimony, that arising from our own observation, in the case particularly described in Appendix E. of the present volume. Struck with that description, given, however, nearly half a century since, we recently visited the parish in question, with a view to ascertain whether any change had taken place in its *then* happy condition.

On our arrival at the village, we sought out the Guardian of the Poor ; and acquainted him with the object of our visit—namely, to inquire into

* Dawson's *Causes of Pauperism*, p. 5, 6.

the present condition of the poor of that parish. His answer was, "Sir, we have no poor." "How is that?" was the rejoinder, "Do you mean to say that you have no poor-rates, nor any demand on the funds of the Union?" "They make us raise a poor-rate of 6d. in the pound every year," replied he, "but we have at present no charge whatever on the funds of the board." "How, then, do your labourers contrive?" was the next question,—"that they never want help?" "The cottagers, Sir, *have all of them a bit of land*, at a moderate rent; and so, what with working for the farmers when they are wanted, and working in their own gardens at other times, they manage to do very well. We scarcely ever have any application from them." "And what are the wages of farm-labourers, hereabouts?" "Two shillings a day, Sir, everywhere in this country."

Here, then, was a purely agricultural community, properly distributed and adjusted. There were no serfs; for the poor cottager with his four or five acres of ground, and a right to send a cow into "the cow-pastures" for 12s. per annum, possessed just that degree of independence which was right and desirable. All was orderly and happy, because all was humane and Christian-like.

But through how many parishes of equal extent and population might we pass, in Wiltshire,

Hampshire, Sussex, or Buckinghamshire, before we came to such another community? In most parts of these, and of many other counties of England, a covert war has been made upon the poor. Whenever it was possible, their little dwellings have been thrown down; and now we often find two families in one miserable hovel; a father, mother, and several sons and daughters, all sleeping in one room. The least scrap of garden is in most cases denied.* The same mean and selfish policy is seen in the management of the farms. As small an outlay of labour as possible is bestowed upon the land. Thus, having no gardens to fill up their unemployed hours, the whole mass of labourers are thrown upon a reluctant market; and the farmer has no difficulty in beating down wages to 1s. 2d. or 1s. 4d. a day. But it is obvious, that a labourer in Rutland, with four or five acres of land, and access to the parochial cow-pastures, and earning 2s. per day when at work for the farmer, is fully twice as well off as one in Buckinghamshire, at 1s. 4d. a day, without even a foot of garden-ground. The difference is just that between com-

* A clergyman in Buckinghamshire once remarked in our hearing, that when, in one instance, some cottage-allotments had been given to the poor,—most of the labourers, when they dug up their potatoes, had no place to put them in, but under their bedsteads!

fort and misery ; between humble ease and independence, and hopeless, reckless penury and half-starvation.

The “bane and antidote,” then, are “both before us.” It is scarcely possible for any one thing to be made more clear and indubitable, than is the way in which our agricultural poor may be raised from their present too general depression. But to do this, legislative interference is absolutely essential. That short-sighted selfishness which has spread suffering and discontent over half the counties of England, will not suddenly change into kindness and sympathy ; or hasten, in a strange and unprecedented repentance, to undo its own work. Hence it was that Mr. Sadler urged this great question on the attention of the British parliament, and would unquestionably, had he remained in the House of Commons, have continually renewed his appeal. His speech and motion for leave to bring in a bill, was followed by a draft of the measure itself, which was printed, and distributed among the members, with a view to future discussion. But shortly afterwards he was forced by the government to send the case of the factory-labourers to a committee ; of which committee he himself became of necessity chairman ; and this protracted investigation rendered it impossible to take another

step in the agricultural question during that session.

His bill embraced three main objects, together with sundry minor points : The three chief were, 1. The providing everywhere, a sufficient number of cottages to accommodate the labourers : 2. The giving to all the deserving poor, in the agricultural districts, an opportunity of occupying small plots of ground, for the employment of their leisure hours : 3. The institution of a new class of officers, one being allotted to each parish ; under the title of “ protectors of the poor ; ” with powers to carry into full effect the two objects just stated.*

Such was his measure ;—simple, but of the most straight-forward and effectual kind. Had it been adopted, the New Poor Law would never have been required ; and at the present moment England would have been both a stronger and a happier realm than she now is. At present the evil still exists ; and, until something very nearly tantamount to his plan is adopted, that evil will continue to exist.

The three widely-differing modes of dealing with the poor, which are advocated by the three main divisions of the British public, are these :—

* An office somewhat resembling this, has recently been created in many of our Colonies, under the title of “ *Protectors of the Aborigines.* ”

1. The Malthusian ; which boldly proposes to treat poverty as a crime ; and to enact “ the preventive check ” to the fullest extent. Every unemployed and indigent man is to be told, that “ he has no business to be where he is ; ” and that “ at Nature’s great feast there is no vacant place for him.” Of course all laws for the relief of the indigent are declared to be vicious in principle ; and to be entirely repealed as quickly as possible. Any man, after such repeal, daring to marry without a prospect of being able to maintain a family, (the word “ prospect ” here is shewn by the penalty attached to mean “ certainty ; ”—a certainty which no one who subsists by daily labour can possibly attain) is to be held a criminal ; and if sickness or want of employment overtakes him, he is to be “ left to the punishment of “ Nature, the punishment of severe want.” *

2. Next, we have, the New Poor Law system, which is based upon the Malthusian principle, but is accommodated to the circumstances of the times ; its authors rightly judging, that pure Malthusianism, in the shape of law, would not be tolerated for a moment by the people of England. This moderated system, therefore, only proposes to “ elevate the character of the poor,” by “ throwing them on

* *Malthus*, Essay, 4to. p. 539.

their own resources ; ” teaching them prudence, forethought, &c. &c. Practically, however, it seeks to tighten the system of relief ; to make assistance difficult and disagreeable to the poor man ; and to clog its aid with such hateful conditions as to induce many rather to starve than accept it. Throughout the whole of this scheme, while it differs from Malthus in admitting the right of the indigent to relief in want, there is still not one single breathing of sympathy or kindness towards the poor.

3. Differing from both these, Mr. Sadler's system at once professed to regard the poor as “ more sinned against than sinning ; ” as those who, though not faultless, had been driven and drawn into fault by the mismanagement of their rulers. Yet he proposed no reckless or lavish distribution of alms. All he wished was, to approach them as friends, and as wishing to do them good. Thus, to excite hope,—to lead them onwards and upwards by encouragements to industry,—to rebuild their demolished cottages,—to restore their stolen gardens ; and to replace those rounds of the ladder, immediately above their own, which it had been the constant effort of selfish men for half a century to break away.

As we have already said, England will not be herself again until some system based upon this

principle be publicly and nationally adopted. Meanwhile, however, the evils of the existing state of things may be partially and locally checked, by the adoption of Mr. Sadler's system, in their own neighbourhood, by those who have power over land. We again quote from Mr. Dawson :—

“ The conclusions which I draw from the foregoing statements are, that there is a great fondness on the part of industrious persons, whether in moderate or indigent circumstances, to cultivate, on almost any terms, a little ground on their own account ; that such cultivation would be very beneficial to them, could they obtain land at the average price paid by the large occupiers ; that facilities in this behalf are not afforded, otherwise the high prices stated above could not possibly have been obtained ; that a cottage strictly agricultural as far exceeds in value what is called *accommodation land*, as burnished gold surpasses glittering tinsel ; and that an increase in the number of such cottages would greatly tend to produce an increase in the number of worthy rural characters. The author of the *Vicar of Wakefield* has feelingly observed, ‘ that the nakedness of the indigent world ’ *might* ‘ be clothed from the trimmings of the vain.’ Permit me to adopt and to extend the idea, (unaccompanied, however, by reproach, either open or insinuated,) by observing,

that the hems and fringes of the estates of the large landed proprietors would be amply sufficient, not only to clothe, but also to feed the industrious but 'indigent world;' and this, without any diminution of income, without any injury to the property, and without any encroachment on the just and legal rights of ownership."

We believe that there is a great disposition among the larger landed proprietors, to act in this manner towards the poor. Indeed, in the various efforts which are now making, in various parts of England, to revive the spirit and character of the peasantry, it is almost always seen that a large proprietor, whether peer or commoner, is the mainspring of the improvement. The opposition arises chiefly from those who fancy their own interests interfered with;—the farmers and managers of estates. The former generally object to the occupation of land by the labourers, on the ground that "it makes the men *saucy*;"—in other words, it lifts them one stage above that utter helplessness which is most convenient for the selfish employer. The manager or steward, too, often sympathises with the man of his own rank; and finds it easier to collect rent from ten great farmers, than from nine farmers and fifty cottagers. Hence, the land-owner who desires to make an effort to regenerate the pauper-peasantry

of his neighbourhood, must resolve on encountering and overcoming much trouble ; and overbearing numberless obstacles which will strangely and suddenly spring up in his path. Let him, however, persevere, and that not for one or two years only, but for ten ; and he shall ultimately reap a rich reward for his labour.

But it is time we proceeded to the consideration of the circumstances of the other great section of the national industry,—that devoted to Manufactures. It so happened that circumstances drew Mr. Sadler so much more prominently forward in this matter, than in the former, as in some measure to associate his name in perpetuity with “ The Factory question.”

The demands made by him on the justice and humanity of the legislature, on behalf of the infant labourers in the factories, were, *prima facie*, such as could neither be questioned nor resisted. It was asserted, and established by abundant proof, that the general practice of the mill-owners, in all branches, and in all parts of the country, was to run their machinery, chiefly tended by young children, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen hours a day, and in many cases even to a greater extent.

The effects of such protracted labour on the infant frame, were deeply and permanently injurious, weakening and crippling the bodily frame ;

often inducing disease and death ; and universally preventing all mental or religious instruction. These evils,—so inevitably following over-labour, that the minute and particular proof of them ought never to have been required,—were fully proved before a Committee of the House of Commons ; and again established by the personal enquiry in the factory-districts, of a body of Commissioners, chosen by a government favourable to the mill-owners, and therefore not themselves likely to be prejudiced against that powerful body. The wrong done being thus made clear and certain ; redress ought to have followed without delay. But it has not yet followed. Even to this moment, the influence of the mill-owners prevails, and justice and mercy still linger in their course. Pleas are offered to stop the application of the remedy. All that remains for us to do, then, is to examine for a few moments, the validity of these pleas.

It is said, that the facts established may make an impression on the feelings ; but that “ sound policy,” and “ more enlarged views,” would bring to light other considerations, chiefly of an economical kind, which ought to make us pause before we yield to mere impressions in this matter. That children should be worked beyond their strength, is admitted to be an evil ; but it is said that other

evils, and perhaps still more serious ones, would arise from not so working them. These are generally hinted, in somewhat vague terms, to be the loss of those children's wages to the parents, by their being thrown out of work; (though why a law reducing the hours of labour to *ten* daily, *should* throw them out of work, is not explained,) —also, the possible injury to our manufacturers generally, if foreigners, extracting more labour *per diem* from their work-people than we do, should thereby undersell us in all open markets.

Now, to go into these minute points, as to *possible* evils, would be a most endless and hopeless task; inasmuch as all must be vague speculation as to future results, concerning which no certainty could by any means be attained. But it seems to us not at all difficult to shew, to any really unprejudiced and dispassionate mind, that one of the main doctrines of the modern school of political economists, even of the most ultra-Malthusian cast, ought, if fairly carried out to its results, to lead to the very limitation of labour for which Mr. Sadler pleaded. We repeat, that meeting these reasoners on their own ground of economical policy, and quite postponing, for the moment, the claims of justice and humanity, they are bound by their own principles to join us in demanding a “Ten-Hour Bill.”

It will not require much time or space to explain what we mean. We begin with Mr. John Ramsay M'Culloch, who, in his remarkable evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1825, advised,

“ The introduction into parish-schools of books
“ teaching the plain and elementary principles
“ about *population* and *wages* : ” so as to teach the children “ that their condition depended upon
“ the wages they could earn ; and that those
“ wages depended upon *the proportion which their*
“ *numbers bore* to the numbers that were in demand, to be employed.” And thus, by “ explaining to the children of the poor the principles which determine the extent to which they
“ shall be able to command the comforts and
“ necessities of life,” to “ remove habits of improvidence with respect to early marriages.”

Next, we open the work of another oracle of the same party, Mrs. Marcet, who puts this sort of reasoning into her village Solon's mouth :

“ John then went on to show that if the labourers
“ *took care to have small families*, (!) they would gain
“ another and a still greater advantage : not only
“ would they have fewer children to clothe and
“ feed, and therefore their money would go farther,
“ but also their wages would necessarily be higher.
“ The rich, instead of having too many workmen,

“ would have too few. His wife thought that this
“ would not mend matters, for that the fewer the
“ labourers, the more work would each have to do.
“ But John replied very properly, ‘ Nay, nay, we
“ are not slaves, and cannot be forced to work more
“ than we are willing. Now,’ continued he, ‘ if
“ we were fewer in number, the rich would be look-
“ ing out for workmen, instead of workmen looking
“ out for employers, as is the case now. And if
“ there was a want of hands instead of a want of
“ work, those who wanted work to be done would
“ be ready enough to pay higher wages. We might
“ say to our employers, ‘ If you do not choose to
“ give us a better price for our labour, we will go
“ elsewhere to others who will.’ But if any of us
“ were to say that now, when there are so many all
“ wanting employment, we should starve in idle-
“ ness, for others would consent to work at the low
“ prices which we had refused.”

Again, on a supposition of a reduction of labour-
ers, and consequent advance of wages ;

“ Then,” said his wife, returning to her favourite
subject, “ when the labouring people were so well
“ off, they might marry young, for they could afford
“ to provide for a large family if they chanced to
“ have one.” John readily agreed to this, observing
at the same time, “ that people must take care,
“ however, not to overshoot the mark ; for that, if

“they increased and multiplied so much, that in
 “the end the market were again overstocked with
 “labourers, wages would naturally lower again,
 “and then the poor would be in no better
 plight “than they were before the plague. And
 that “is the plight we are in now,” continued
 John.*

Once more; “Many years ago a cotton-manu-
 “factory was set up in the neighbourhood, which
 “afforded ample employment for the poor; and
 “even the children who were before idle, could
 “now earn something towards their maintenance.
 “This, during some years, had an admirable
 “effect in raising the condition of the labouring
 “classes.” * * * * * “But this
 “prosperous state was not of long duration; in
 “the course of time the village became over-
 “stocked with labourers, and it is now sunk into
 “a state of poverty and distress worse than that
 “from which it had emerged. Thus this manu-
 “factory, which at first proved a blessing to the
 “village, and might always have continued such,
 “was, *by the improvidence of the labourers*, converted
 “into an evil. If the population had not increased
 “beyond the demand for labour, the manufac-

* *John Hopkins's Notions of Political Economy.* By the Au-
 thor of “*Conversations on Chemistry.*” pp. 60, 65.

“ ture might still have afforded them the advantage it at first produced.” *

Lastly, we turn to a third teacher of the same school, the equally famed Miss Martineau, who thus counsels,—

“ What, then, must be done, to lessen the number of the indigent now so frightfully increasing?

* * * * *

“ The number of consumers must be *proportioned* to the subsistence-fund. To this end, all encouragements to the increase of population should be withdrawn, and every sanction given to the *preventive check*.” †

And, in another place, addressing the work-people, she asks,—

“ Could so dreadful a reduction (of wages) have ever taken place, if you had not undersold one another? And how are the masters to help you if you *go on increasing your numbers* and underselling one another, as if your employers could find occupation for any number of millions of you, or could coin the stones under your feet into wages, or knead the dust of the earth into bread? They do what they can for you, in increasing the capital on which you are to subsist;

* *Conversations on Political Economy*. 1817. p. 151, 152.

† *Cousin Marshall*: By Harriet Martineau, p. 132.

“ and you must do the rest, by *proportioning your numbers to the means of subsistence.*” *

Thus do we find each of these great teachers of Political Economy insisting upon the same points,—that the rate of wages mainly depends on the quantity of labour in the market;—that if the market of labour be “overstocked,” wages must inevitably be depressed;—and that the pressure on the market of labour, by which wages are so lamentably reduced, is to be mainly or even solely attributed to “the improvidence of the working classes,” in “increasing their numbers:” So that the only remedy to be looked for must spring from the work-people themselves; by their general adoption of “the preventive check,” and their thus “proportioning their numbers to the means of subsistence.”

But this is, most clearly and undeniably, a one-sided and atrociously unjust view. It is far more easy for the *masters* to “overstock the labour-market,” than for the *workmen*: It is quite capable of proof that this evil has originated with the former,—not with the latter: And it would be much more rational to look for a cure in this direction, than to expect it in the other.

Let us examine the matter in the most practical

* *Manchester Strike*: By Harriet Martineau, p. 101.

way. We will take the case, for example, of a Leicestershire or Nottinghamshire town ; in which hosiery of various kinds is the staple manufacture. Let us assume that one thousand work-people of different classes have been for years employed in this town, at fair wages ; and that this appears to be about the number of hands that the stocking-trade of that town can conveniently and profitably maintain.

Now, say the M'Cullochs, Martineaus, and Marcets,—if, in the place where these 1000 hands, and no more, are required,—there offer themselves in the labour-market, some 1200 or 1300,—it is certain that the competition for employment will materially reduce wages ; and thus a great step towards poverty and distress will be taken. This position no one will think of denying. But then these three kind-hearted persons insist on going further, and assuming at once that the work-people *have*, by improvident marriages, thus brought 1300 hands into the market in which only 1000 were needed ; and have thus, *by their own folly*, caused, and *brought upon themselves*, all the misery which now exists !

The first and most obvious objection to this bold assumption, is, that it not only takes for granted some very strange and important things, which ought not and cannot be credited without the

clearest proof ;—but that it entirely contradicts all that established series of facts which usually form the basis of all such calculations.

We are now speaking of the increase of a manufacturing population,—*not by immigration*, be it observed, but, by “improvident marriages.” It is to *these* that Messrs. M'Culloch and Co. attribute the overflow of the labour-market ; and it is of this fault only that we have to speak.

Now there is perhaps scarcely any one fact more thoroughly established than this,—that a manufacturing population,—the labourers in a factory-town,—so far from increasing too fast by “improvident marriages,” would, if not fed by constant immigration from without, *fail of keeping up its own numbers*. Most assuredly, the most that any person can possibly assume of such a population, is,—putting immigration out of the question,—that it might grow correlatively with the whole population of the realm ;—so that if the kingdom advanced ten per cent, in seven years, *it* would advance as much. We doubt if there be a manufacturing town of any size, of which, excluding immigration, even so much as this could safely be asserted.

But what can be more clear than this,—that a population only augmenting itself at an equal rate with the whole population of the realm, can-

not be chargeable with “overloading the labour-market?” If the 1000 stocking-weavers had grown into 1100 in seven years,—the legs of the nation, to clothe which they laboured, would also have grown, in the same time, from 10,000,000 pairs, to 11,000,000. And thus all would remain comparatively the same as before.

The charge against the poor work-people, then, of causing their own distress by their own improvidence, is unfounded; and being unfounded, it is most unfeeling, cruel, and oppressive. Our present object, however, is to shew, that it ought to be alleged, *not against the workmen, but against the masters*; and that in a way which strongly bears upon the question of the “Ten-Hour Bill.”

The work-people are represented by all the writers we have just quoted, as “overstocking the market of labour” by their excessive numbers, caused by improvident marriages. Yet nothing can be more obvious than this,—that no 1000 labourers that ever yet lived, could, by their “improvident marriages,” overstock the market of their town with competitors for labour, in less than a period extending over some ten or twenty years.

On the other hand it is quite undeniable that the *masters* of the supposed town can, if they please, produce the very same result in the course of *a few months*. And this, irrespective of

immigration ; by simply *increasing the hours of labour*.

In the town we have supposed, 1000 work-people have been comfortably supported ; proceeding (we are of course looking back a few years) on the old-fashioned notion, that “ a day’s work ” included twelve hours ; out of which two were allowed for meals ; leaving a net labour of *ten* hours. Now we have already conceded, that the appearance of 200 or 300 more labourers in the market, without any answerable increase in the demand for goods, must “ burden the market of labour ” and greatly depress wages. But is it not quite obvious that exactly the same consequences must follow from a determination, on the part of the masters, to work their hands twelve or thirteen hours per diem, exclusive of meals ; instead of ten, as heretofore ?

If the masters should thus, employing the same number of hands, make 1200 or 1300 pairs of stockings where they previously made only 1000 ; without, however, having any increased demand ; they would quickly glut the market with goods ; depress prices ; and thus compel the lowering of wages. But if they only aimed at making as many goods as heretofore, this they would be able to do with 800 hands instead of 1000 ; and thus 200 hands would be thrown out of work ; would press upon

the labour-market; and would *thus*, in another way, bring about a lowering of wages.

What can be more obvious, then, than that it is far more in the power of the masters to “overstock the labour-market,” than of the workmen; that they are also more likely to do it, than the latter; and that, in fact, the pressure on the market which has recently taken place, and under which wages are at present so lamentably depressed, is *their* work, and ought not to be laid to “the improvidence and early marriages” of the workmen.

Let any one try to conceive, if he can, what would have been the state of this kingdom, at the present moment, if, for the last seven years, the manufacturers, instead of urging on their work-people to a toil of fourteen, fifteen, and often sixteen hours per diem, had contented themselves with the moderate business, and moderate gains, which might have been realized by “a fair day’s labour.”

We may concede, indeed, that probably some three or four Marshalls or Cobdens would have failed to realize the enormous fortunes which they have made in those years; but except in this one respect, what other parties could be named, who would not have been gainers by the lower and more moderate system?

We should not have seen the scores of head-long men, whose hopes, excited by the wealth so

rapidly realized by a few individuals, drew them into a vehement career in the same path ; which, in nine cases out of ten, has ended in ruin to themselves, and heavy losses to all connected with them.

We should not have seen the hundreds of new houses rising up in a few months, at Stockport, Nottingham, Ashton, &c. for the accommodation of the myriads of new work-people brought into the labour-market ; not by the “ improvidence ” and early marriages of the workmen already employed ; but by the greedy, ravenous cupidity of the Gregs and Ashworths ; and which dwellings are now either standing unoccupied, or filled only by the starving victims of that cupidity.

We should not have seen the markets of the world so glutted with English goods, as to return one general answer from every quarter of the globe, “ They cannot be sold even for two-thirds “ of the cost of manufacturing them.”

Instead of all these things, we should have beheld a quiet and steady growth of trade, springing out of, and answering to, the growth of population. We should have seen wages rise rather than fall ; and the condition of the working classes become gradually better and more hopeful.

These results would unquestionably have flowed from any measure which could have secured the limitation, seven years since, of the “ day’s la-

bour," whether in factory or workshop, to the old-fashioned, common-sense extent, of ten hours' actual work, exclusive of two for meals. May we not, then, reasonably assert, that if it had been possible for any government to have obtained these results without any vicious interference with trade, it ought to have felt the greatest desire to do so.

We say, then, that on the principles of M'Culloch, Martineau, &c.—which show us how the rate of wages is depressed by any "burdening of the labour-market,"—any proposition which had a tendency to hinder such a burdening, ought to be regarded with favour by a paternal government.

We do not, however, overlook or underrate the objections which must always exist, to any legislative interference between workman and employer. However desirable we may deem it, to place a strong curb upon that "haste to get rich," which produces such misery and confusion; we readily admit the impolicy and impropriety of intermeddling with men in the conduct of their affairs, *so long* as no positive offence against equity or morals is committed. Hence, we cannot counsel the least attempt to fix a minimum of wages; or to interpose in any way between the employer and his adult and responsible workman.

But the case is different when the helpless and unprotected call upon us to guard them from

cruel oppression. We would hasten to their assistance without scruple and without delay ; and all the more willingly if such interference appeared likely to effect also that other object,—of checking excessive labour, impartially, whether of adults or of children.

The general conclusions, then, at which we arrive, are of this kind :—

1. That an excessive amount of labour may be brought into the market, and wages thereby be reduced, more certainly, and more readily, by the employer's increasing each man's work, than by the workmen increasing their own numbers by improvident marriages :

2. That this depressing weight thrown upon the labour-market, of late years, by the cupidity of the masters, has mainly brought about the present want of employment, and consequent low rate of wages :

3. That the disposition of the Legislature ought to be, to look with a jealous eye on this result of excessive competition ; and to embrace every opportunity of checking it :

4. That the bodily and mental injuries inflicted on the infant-labourers in factories, are denied by no one ; and the redress of these enormous wrongs is called for by the whole community, excepting only those persons who profit by them.

And, 5. That thus both classes of motives, the economical and the moral, unite in urging us to the immediate adoption of a measure like “the Ten-Hour Bill;” which, while it protects the infant-labourers, on the one hand; has also a tendency to check all over-work, on the other.

We have now, we believe, developed the main features of Mr. Sadler’s system; which may perhaps be made more intelligible, and more easily embraced by the eye, in the following form:—

His first principle involved a direct denial of the Malthusian scheme, and the assertion of an opposite theory:

He shewed the “geometric ratio,”—the foundation of Mr. Malthus’s system,—to be a fiction, utterly at variance with every known fact:

He shewed that the tendency of the Divine command, “Increase and multiply,”—was towards happiness and prosperity, and not, as Mr. Malthus asserted, towards misery and starvation:*

* We have already adverted (in Note, p. 569) to the testimony of Mr. G. Tradescant Lay, one of the latest residents in China, touching the condition of the people of that country. The evidence of that gentleman is conclusive as to the question of population. From Mr. Malthus down to his latest disciple in the present day, the universal dread appears to be, the increasing numbers of the people. This is the main evil which, according to their view, afflicts our globe. All other evils might be rectified, if only this dreadful growth of population could be stayed!

He shewed that “the Preventive check,”—the main reliance of Malthus and his followers for the

From these theorists, it is delightful to turn to the language of a man who has himself lived in that populous empire ; and who thus describes his impressions :—

“The prosperity of the Chinese tempts me to frame a system of political economy, which lays Population as the foundation whereon everything in the way of social comfort and personal affluence is reared. If the valleys and plains be covered with inhabitants, the opportunities of living by the chase or the spontaneous gifts of nature are soon reduced, and the soil must be turned over for a crop, and the sea be summoned to yield its finny stores. The necessity of tilling the ground and investing the water with nets, prompts men to set about the manufacture of implements of husbandry and the building of boats. Here we have the first germs of art and enterprise. The skill employed in the forging of a spade to stir the ground, or a plough to part the clods, may be diverted into a hundred channels, and ultimately give rise to as many discoveries.” “The wealth of the community grows out of man, and not out of the soil, except in a secondary and subordinate sense. This we see demonstrated in countries where the means of living are secured without industry ; for the people have nothing beside. If the tenants should all on a sudden be so far multiplied that much labour and assiduity were needful to obtain a livelihood, *that would prove the birth-day of plenty*. I look upon man as the great capital of a nation—a view which is based upon what I see in China, where *a swarming people are incircled by a swarm of comforts*. In no country do the inhabitants crowd every habitable spot as in China ; in no country do the poor people abound with so many of the elegancies and luxuries of life.” “Early marriage encourages fertility and augments the population, already vast, and, consequently, the means of living,

salvation of the country,—was utterly fallacious as to its *results*; while, at the same time, it was full of cruelty in its *operation*.*

He shewed, therefore, that the dictates of God's word, and of every man's conscience, were to be

“ which bear a ratio to that population. Thus we are carried round in a circle, and brought back to man, with this benediction, “ Be fruitful and multiply,” as the corner-stone of all the stores of plenty.

“ Were I about to graduate a scale in accordance with the theory I have advanced, I should begin with Borneo Proper, the fairest land that couches beneath a genial sun, and say, “ ‘ See, here, amidst all the capabilities of a fertile soil, a favouring climate, and ample territories, is a wretched apology for a market,—consisting of a few vegetables, a little fish, with here and there a fowl; and as for the men, a child might number them ! ’—Let this Borneo be considered as *zero* in our politico-economic scale. In China, the natives throng all those parts which are susceptible of tillage, till there is not room enough to hold them. Here we behold an assortment of comforts for the poor, such as no other country can parallel :—Let this be the maximum height of our scale.”—Pages 262—264.

* The phrase, “ Preventive Check,” may, to those who have only slightly studied the subject, merely convey the idea of *prudence* or *foresight*; and such may wonder why any repugnance should exist towards so indispensable a point in morality. Let us, then, briefly shew what those who inculcate this same “ Preventive Check ” *really mean by it*. We will shew this entirely in their own words.

The *Edinburgh Review*, after insisting that “ measures ought to be taken to *check* the undue *increase* of labourers;”—instances, as one such step,—that “ something *decisive* ought to be done “ to check the practice of *building cottages* for paupers.” (Vol.

obeyed, and not overruled, as Mr. Malthus would have counselled, by a hard and relentless system of “philosophy, falsely so called :” That to pity

liii. p. 58.) The same writer adds, that no farmer who understood his own interest, would “suffer” a labourer to possess any land “beyond a *moderate-sized* garden.”

Miss Martineau obliges us with some further details. In the same work,—“*Cousin Marshall*,”—in which she lays it down as a first principle, that “all encouragement to the increase of population should be withdrawn, and every sanction given to the “preventive check,”—she thus particularizes the withdrawals she recommends :

“The cottage system will not bear the test. Under no system “does population increase more rapidly.” (p. 115.)

“The more support you offer them, the more surprisingly “they will increase. Surely you do not mean to go on giving “coals and blankets !” (p. 117.)

“The absence of Dispensaries and Lying-in Hospitals would be “the *absence of evil* to society.” “The Lying-in Charity the “worst in existence ;—so direct a bounty on improvidence,— “so high a premium on population.” (p. 35, 37.)

“Alms-houses for the aged are *very bad things*. Numbers of “young people marry under the expectation of getting their “helpless parents maintained by the public.” (p. 42.)

Thus we see that, according to their own explanation of the term, “the preventive check,” when thoroughly enforced, goes to repress the building of cottages ; to deprive every poor man of all holding of land beyond a “*moderate-sized* garden ;” to put down alms-houses for the aged ; dispensaries and lying-in hospitals for the sick and destitute ; and the distribution even of clothing and fuel to the shivering poor in winter’s inclemency ! In fact, as Lord Althorp plainly stated in the House of Commons, this principle, fairly carried out, prohibits both legal relief, and *all kinds of private charity* ! Need we say any more to prove

and assist the poor, both individually and nationally, was sound policy, as well as "true religion ;"

And, finally, that the only efficient " Preventive Check " was that supplied by Hope, and inculcated by kindness: for that while a limitation to cold potatoes and water, and a cheerless hearth,

that the " Preventive Check " is a direct inspiration of the Father of lies,—of him whose grand occupation and delight it is, to render earth a foretaste of hell.

Neither is this miserable nostrum a whit more rational than it is Christian-like. As an expedient to " keep down population " it is a sheer absurdity; setting at nought all experience. It assumes that whatever offers to the poor any aid or comfort, " tends to " increase population ;" and that only the dread or the actual infliction of starvation, can " keep down their numbers !" And this in the face of facts which present themselves hourly of the following kind :—

In the *Times* of Jan. 7, 1842, we observe a report of an inquest held on Charlotte Walters, the wife of a poor Bethnal-Green weaver,—whose days had been passed in the greatest want and misery. She had been frequently in the deepest distress ; without food or firing ; and begging a few half-pence to preserve life. Yet she died at the age of 31, three weeks after being confined of her *twelfth* child ; and the medical attendant attributed her death to *constant* child-bearing.

And while this perfectly agrees with what is always going on in Ireland, and wherever there is a particularly poor population ; we find in the English peerage no fewer than *eleven* dukes, who have *among them* only *nine* children !

Yet it is a fundamental maxim with the " Political Economists," that men always " breed up to the level of food ;" and that to give food is to encourage the growth of a surplus population !

has often taught, and is daily teaching to multitudes, Despair and utter recklessness ; the best means of inculcating prudence and forethought, have ever been, the actual experience of Comfort, and the prospect of Advancement.

From these main and governing principles, he then proceeded to deduce the following practical propositions :—

1. That the indigent poor of Ireland should no longer be excluded from the pale of humanity ; but should be acknowledged to be as justly entitled to relief in periods of want and destitution, as the same class among the people of England.

2. That the Legislature should next take cognizance of the depressed and demoralized state of many of the agricultural poor of England. Most of the wrongs under which they were suffering had been inflicted by Acts of Parliament,—taking from them their commons, and continually patching and altering their original charter, of the 43d of Elizabeth, so as reduce them, step by step, to some still lower and more degraded state. The remedy was equally within the powers of Parliament. It could enact that cottages should be raised, sufficient to lodge the labouring poor ; and that plots of garden-ground should be set apart for

them. All this was quite feasible, without any violent stretch of power ; and it was not only feasible, but necessary, if the agricultural poor were to be raised out of their present state of suffering and despair.

3. That the inordinate spirit of competition, exhibited by the great manufacturers, should be checked, in so far as it trampled down, not only the adult but the youthful labourer, and even the tender and defenceless child : that the most obvious dictates of humanity, and also the suggestions of a sound policy, demanded that the day's labour of children and young persons in factories should be limited to ten hours.

These were his three main propositions in Parliament ; and it is sufficiently clear that, as they embraced in their operation the great bulk of the British people, he could scarcely have added any others of like importance.

His fertile mind, however, was stored with various schemes for the improvement of the condition of the people ; and, whether in propounding plans himself, or in supporting or opposing those of others, his one object, his ceaseless aim and endeavour, was, to raise and comfort and benefit the poor.

On this ground he gave his most determined opposition to the Anatomy Bill of Mr. Warburton ;

well knowing that it would tend, as the fact has since proved, to repel the poor both from hospitals and workhouses ; and to induce them rather to die among their friends, of want and disease, than to go where, after death, their bodies would be cut into fragments for the amusement of juvenile students of surgery.

On this ground he looked with jealousy at the advance of the Free Trade system ; well knowing that its ultimate tendency was, to bring the English labourer into direct competition with the continental workman ; and thus, as the latter generally fared harder than the Englishman, and lived under lighter taxation, it must necessarily follow, in most cases, that the British labourer must either be thrown out of employment, or else descend to the level, or even below the level, of German or Polish wages and fare.

On this ground he felt the greatest disgust at several of the leading provisions of the New Poor Law ;—not from any irrational attachment to the patchwork system which existed prior to 1833 ; but from a conviction that the new measure proposed to deal with the poor coercively, instead of paternally ; aiming to *drive* them to forethought and provident habits by the fear of want, instead of *drawing* them by the inducements of hope, and the prospects of advancement.

On this ground, lastly, he disapproved of the measures adopted to restrict the paper-currency, which, up to 1819, and, in a smaller degree, up to 1829, gave such an impetus to the trade and industry of Britain. He discerned at a glance, that the tendency of such measures of restriction must be still further to augment the power of real capital, already too great among us; and to deprive the poorer ranks among the middling classes, of those means of advancing themselves which they had long enjoyed. Had he lived at the present moment, he would neither have been found among those who absurdly attribute our existing depression to the operation of the Corn Laws; nor among those who, with equal irrationality, talk of “those occasional fluctuations and seasons of depression which must always be looked for in a commercial country.” Turning to the appalling fact, that the paper-currency of England and Wales was, in Oct. 1838, £30,723,962, and on Jan. 8, 1842, only £24,813,386, he would have here detected the main and sufficient cause of all the depression and suffering which now exist; and would have held it to be the duty of the Government, to take some means to prevent the continuance or recurrence of so fearful an evil.*

* See *Appendix* (G.)

So much of the past. But it is now almost ten years since Mr. Sadler trod the floor of St. Stephen's Chapel. Shall we not, then, turn for a moment to the present position of public affairs, and endeavour to apply his principles to the state of the nation in our own day?

These years, as they have passed, have only confirmed and made more certain, the truth of Mr. Sadler's principles, and the wisdom of his plans. The physicians of the state, forced, however reluctantly, to adopt the first of his propositions, and to commence, at last, the civilization of Ireland, have yet fixedly refused to proceed another step in the course which he marked out. They have kept England in the evil predicament in which he showed her to stand; or rather, have preferred certain nostrums of their own, for pulling down small workhouses and building large ones; and improving the character and dispositions of the poor by shutting up the indigent,—the fathers in one workhouse, the mothers in another, the girls in a third, the boys in a fourth! All over the realm we see large and costly buildings rising, some for the close confinement of paupers, some for lunatics, some for criminals; the proportion of the last two classes to the whole population being rapidly on the increase. And whence the direful necessity for all these expensive receptacles for

idle labourers, and broken hearts, and ruined characters and souls? It all arises from one shameful cause—the resolute refusal to treat the people with kindness and paternal care.

What is it that Mr. Sadler asked; and that we shall continue still to ask; and must ask, till either the realm be saved by doing justice, or lost by “shutting its ear to the cry of the needy?” Was it any new and strange and extravagant thing? It was as far as possible from any such folly. It was the plainest, simplest, most practical, and most approved by experience, of all things.

It was, that the poor agricultural labourer should be permitted to have a cottage to dwell in; instead of being, as at present, crammed, often with a wife and five or six children, into *a single room* of some miserable hut.

It was, that after taking from him his right of common, you would restore him a sufficient plot of garden-ground; which makes, in most cases, just all the difference between hopeless misery and comparative comfort.

It was, that when seduced or driven into the manufacturing towns, either by the fallacious promises held out by the mill-owner’s crimps, or the utter hopelessness of his former condition,—his offspring, taken from the fresh air of a country

village, may not be immured in the heated factory, inhaling “cotton-fuz,”—for *more* than ten hours a day !

Were these extravagant demands ? Are they so now ? Is once happy England, and still proud and wealthy England, so situated, that she must keep all her village labourers on the verge of pauperism ; all her town-labourers toiling worse than slaves ?

The New Poor Law, — the Sub-Malthusian panacea, has now had its full and fair trial. No one denies that it has done a certain amount of good ; as, indeed, *any* measure on that subject *must have done* ; but will any one venture to affirm that it has contented or quieted the country, or restored the happy peasantry of times gone by ? How should it ;—turning, as it did, a hostile face to the indigent and oppressed ; and mainly aiming to benefit the rate-payers ; those, in fact, who were chiefly to blame for all the abuses of the old system ?

This nostrum, then, has failed. Has failed, we mean, to quiet and content the people. And when we now take up a public journal, of almost any politics except servilely ministerial, we are sure to be reminded that the great point of all, still remaining to be decided, is, “the condition-of-England question.”

Nor do those who have so long refused to do

justice, and substituted any nostrum or excuse for their plain duty, seem to have any other shift left. The first session of a new Parliament has just been opened ; remarkable, too, for this, that it is the first opportunity since the passing of the Reform Bill, that the Conservative party has had, for fully and fairly disclosing *their own policy* ; with abundant power to carry that policy into effect.

The country at large is fully aware of this : sick of whiggism and of the Whigs, *mainly for this reason*, that they refused to do anything for the people,—the great body of electors throughout the nation have deliberately and resolvedly given the helm to the Conservative leaders. They now wait with eagerness and much expectation, to see some good result from this important change.

In one respect they will doubtless be pleased and satisfied. There is little doubt that the affairs of the nation will be better *administered* by the present, than by the late cabinet. There will be more talent displayed ; more of business-habits observable ; and less of recklessness in adopting and casting off plans and principles. The finances of the country will be brought into a more satisfactory state, and divers practical improvements will be made in various departments of the law.

All this is well ; and it would quite suffice, if that were true, which seems to be taken for

granted, that the condition of the mass of the people is already one of comfort and happiness, and one needing no improvement. Were this indeed the case, then truly a discreet and intelligent *administration*,—a government which would simply keep all things in the same satisfactory course, would fully meet the wants and wishes of the nation.

But, unhappily, this is far from being the case. That man must be lamentably ignorant of the real state and feelings of the industrious classes of this country, who can imagine that the labourers in either our villages or our towns are in a state of comfort, or a mood of contentment. And who will be so foolish as to dream that the country is in a safe or wholesome condition, when the millions are unhappy and discontented ?

It was wisely said in our hearing by an intelligent and most estimable village pastor, “ Keep the *feet warm*, and all will go well with you.” It was of *this* question,—of legislation for the poor,—that he was speaking.

We come back, then, to the great topic of this volume. The plans of Mr. Sadler were neither vague, nor visionary, nor extravagant. Nothing more practical, nothing more entirely supported by all past experience, could have been offered to the public notice. They have every recommendation which the cautious and practical statesman ought

to require ; and further, they have *no rivals*. No other theory now disputes the field. The question is, between doing *this* for the poor, or doing *nothing* !

Once more, then, we ask for justice and mercy for the poor of England. Denied even a decent dwelling ; denied the use of even a rood of land ; driven from the commons ; hunted into the towns ; there pent up in noisome cellars, and forced to live upon the toil, the death-inflicting toil of their children ; we ask for them, their cottages, their gardens, a protection from those who would overwork or defraud them ; and lastly, a church and a pastor of their own. Give them these, and you practise the truest economy. Make it *possible* for the peasant to practise the virtue of “ providing for his own,” and you may spare the cost of your spacious Union Workhouses. Give him some little fragment of each day, for mental and religious cultivation, and restore to him his sabbath, now, among our factory-labourers, often lost in sleep from excessive fatigue, and he will learn something of his duty towards God, and his duty towards man. To aid him in this, take care to supply your *six millions* of additional population with churches and pastors. Do this, and to your first saving you may add a large proportion of the Jails and Lunatic Asylums, which an ill-used,

discontented, ignorant, and irreligious population now render absolutely necessary.

In short, deal paternally with your people, and they will repay your care. Feel for them ; supply those wants which they cannot supply for themselves ; guard them from the oppression of those who would “make haste to be rich ;” and you will reap an abundant harvest of internal strength and permanent tranquillity. Such was the constant object of all the schemes and all the labours, and and such would be the result of following in the footsteps, of MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A. p. 2.

That a tradition had always existed in the family, handed down by the father and grandfather of Mr. Michael Thomas Sadler, of a direct descent from the famous Sir Ralph Sadler, the favourite minister of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, we have ascertained from the oldest members of the family now living, themselves senior to Mr. M. T. S. by many years. This tradition ran thus,—“that their descent was from Sir Ralph Sadler : that their name was properly spelled *Sadlier* : and that they came out of *Warwickshire*.”

There was, unquestionably, a degree of internal evidence in the mere existence of such a tradition ; for it hardly appears likely that an obscure country gentleman in Derbyshire, in the middle of the last century, should even know of the existence of such a person as Sir Ralph Sadler ; much less that he should invent details as to the spelling of the name, and the settlement of a part of his family ; both of which prove, when examined, to be strongly corroborative of the tradition.

Still, it appeared desirable, if possible, to discover whether any further evidence was accessible, in proof or disproof, of the allegation. As no records were extant in the family as to their location in Warwickshire, or removal from it, it became necessary to begin at the upper

end of the genealogy, to see what degree of probability might be found to exist, in that direction.

At the first glance, a reference to Warwickshire seemed to furnish evidence in the negative; for of all the great possessions of Sir Ralph, who was reputed "the richest commoner in England," scarcely anything was held by him, at the time of his death, in Warwickshire; and his three sons were settled,—the eldest, Thomas, at Standon lordship in Hertfordshire; the second, Edward, at Temple Dinsley, Herts, and Aspley Guise in Bedfordshire; and the third, Henry, at Everley in Wilts, and Hungerford Lodge, Berkshire.

A little further search, however, turned this apparent inconsistency into a confirmation of the claim. In *Clifford's Sadler Papers*, Vol. II. p. 612, edited by Sir Walter Scott in 1809, a note presented itself, to the effect that there were "three families, descendants of Sir Ralph Sadler, one of which is settled at Aspley Guise; one in Warwickshire; and the third in Hampshire."

Proceeding a little further, we found in *Berry's Encyclopædia Heraldica*, the following notice:—

"SADLER, or SADLIER, [Temple Dinsley, Standon, and Sopwell, Hertfordshire, and *Phillingley, Warwickshire*] or, a lion, rampant, per fesse, az. and gu. Borne by Sir Ralph Sadler, Kn. Bann. temp. Q. Eliz."

Here, then, a positive location of some descendants of Sir Ralph in Warwickshire, was asserted. And on searching the parish registers of Phillongley, divers entries appear of a family whose name is always carefully spelt "Sadler," and who are styled "gent," or "armig."

Further, we may add, that some of these entries agree very well with other entries in the registers of Aspley Guise; at which place the family of Edward, the second

son of Sir Ralph, was settled. The grandson of Edward—Thomas Leigh Sadlier, had twenty-four children; only thirteen of whom appear on record in the Heralds' College; or are mentioned by any of the various writers who have traced the descendants of the great Sir Ralph. One of these,—“John Sadlier,” was baptized on the 30th of April, 1638, and of him we find, at Apsley Guise, no further trace. But at Phillongley in Warwickshire, about sixty-nine years afterwards, we find a “John Sadlier, gent,” among the burials.

It becomes, therefore, a matter of some probability, that a portion of this large family became settled at Phillongley, (as Berry in his *Encyclopædia Heraldica* distinctly asserts it did,) and when we find, sixty or eighty years after, persons in a neighbouring county, Derbyshire, who cherish the tradition, that their name is properly Sadlier,—that their descent is from Sir Ralph,—and that they had migrated from Warwickshire, we must at least admit, that there is both probability and consistency in the claim.

NOTE B. p. 166.

THE main fact relied on by Mr. Malthus, and upon which his whole system is founded, is this,—that the human race increases in a geometrical ratio; or from 2 to 4, from 4 to 8, from 8 to 16, and upwards, without any other hindrances than those caused by vice or misery, or by “the Preventive Check.”

The position taken by Mr. Sadler, and upon which *his* whole system is founded, is,—that the human race does *not* increase in this regular geometrical ratio; but in a ratio perpetually diminishing, according to the increasing density of the population.

In support of his view, Mr Sadler adduced—

1. The table of the English counties, which is given at page 163 of the present volume.

2. A table, occupying six pages, of the departments of France; the general result of which is as follows:—

In the two departments having from four to five hectares to each inhabitant, there were, to 1000 marriages, births	5130
In the three departments in which there were from three to four hectares to each inhabitant, there were, to each 1000 marriages, births	4372
In the thirty departments having from two to three hectares to each inhabitant, to each 1000 marriages, there were, of births	4250
In the forty-four departments in which there were between one and two hectares to each inhabitant, there were, to each 1000 marriages, births	4234
In the five departments in which there were less than one hectare to each inhabitant, to each 1000 marriages, the births were	4146
In the metropolitan department, there were, to every 1000 marriages, births	2557

3. Various tables of the population of Prussia, shewing the following results :

That in two provinces having less than 1000 inhabitants to the square mile, (Germ.) the births to 100 marriages were	503
That in four provinces having from 1000 to 2000, the births to 100 marriages were	454
That in six provinces having from 2000 to 3000, the births to 100 marriages were	426
That in two provinces having from 3000 to 4000, the births to 100 marriages were	394

Again, testing the fact by the increase of population between 1820 and 1827, he found

	per cent.
That where the inhabitants on the square German mile were less than 1500, the annual increase had been	1.912
From 1500 to 2000	1.675
2000 to 2500	1.524
2500 to 3000	1.304
3000 to 4000	1.299
4000 to 5000	1.299
5000 and upwards	1.114

4. The census of Ireland ; the results of which we have given at p. 179 ; and

5. That of the United States ; which is noticed at p. 180.

6. The kingdom of the Netherlands furnished the following results :

Three provinces having less than 50 inhabitants to 100 hectares, mean increase on six years	.0793
Eight provinces having from 50 to 100 inhabitants to 100 hectares, mean increase	.0663
Three provinces having from 100 to 150	.0646
Four provinces having from 150 to 200	.0627
One province having 200 and upwards	.0510

7. Passing over a variety of other tables, containing many incidental and collateral proofs, we give next a remarkable one, exhibiting the diminishing fecundity of marriages in England, as its population has increased:

Periods.	Population.	Births to a Marriage.
1680	5,500,000	4.65
1730	5,800,000	4.25
1770	7,500,000	3.61
1790	8,700,000	3.59
1805	10,678,500	3.50

The above are some of the chief cases adduced in his main work. In his reply to the Edinburgh Reviewer, he added the results of several further censuses which had reached him in the interim. Such as,

8. That of Russia, of 1825, which shewed,

Sixteen provinces having less than 50 inhabitants to the square mile ; in which the births to 100 marriages were	489
Sixteen provinces in which there were from 50 to 100 on the square mile, and the births to 100 marriages were	480
Four provinces having from 100 to 150 on the square mile, and the births to 100 marriages were	461

9. That of Naples, where the annual increase, per cent, was as follows :

In one province having less than 100 on the square mile	. 0142
In six provinces having from 100 to 200 0140
In three provinces having from 200 to 300 0137
In three provinces having from 300 to 400 0100
In one province, the capital 0071

10. That of Denmark, 1828 ; which was as follows :

In one diocese, having less than 50 on the square mile, the baptisms to 100 marriages were 441
In two dioceses having from 50 to 75 402

In two dioceses having from 75 to 100	395
In three dioceses having 100 and upwards	391
In one diocese, the capital	372

11. And lastly, Austrian Lombardy, which presented the following facts :

One delegation, having less than 100 inhabitants on the square mile ; in which to 100 marriages, the births were	532
One delegation, having from 200 to 250, the births	518
Four delegations, having from 250 to 300, the births	499
Three delegations, having 400 and upwards, the births	449

We have selected these eleven instances, from a mass of more than one hundred ; because they are sufficient, and because to give more would encumber our few remaining pages. These tables embrace a grand total of more than 150 millions of the civilized nations of the earth. They were taken without selection ; in fact, nothing could exceed the avidity with which Mr. Sadler seized upon any fresh tables or returns of censuses, which fell in his way, or the delight with which he instantly analyzed their contents. Most readily would he have admitted any returns which might have appeared inconsistent with his theory, and would have laid them before the public, with such explanations as he might have been able to offer. But never was he thus tried. Never once did a return, no matter from what part of the world, fail to contribute its quota of proof to the main argument—fail to show that Mr. Malthus, in his *geometric ratio* of increase, had propounded a fiction only worthy to rank with the astronomical inventions of Tycho Brahe ; or that the fact, first asserted by Mr. Sadler, was universally true, that the ratio of increase in every population, varied with the density of that population.

NOTE C. p. 189.

The mean and paltry sort of manoeuvring by which the appearance of an answer to Mr. Sadler's arguments was got up in the *Edinburgh Review*, can only be made intelligible by the actual production of an instance. We are compelled, therefore, to trouble our readers with a specimen.

It is well known, that in all fair and honest statistical accounts, the practice is to proceed by regular periods or divisions; *usually* lustral or decennial. A census is made up thus, in distinguishing ages, from 1 to 5, 5 to 10, 10 to 15, and so forth. If the progress of any population is to be examined, we proceed in like manner, from 1801 to 1810, 1811 to 1820, 1821 to 1830, &c. And if we found any theorizer varying from this universal practice, and offering us unequal and arbitrary divisions, as from 1 to 6, 7 to 13, 14 to 23, and so forth, we should immediately suspect him of "packing the cards."

Now Mr. Sadler, throughout his work, invariably submits to the fair and admitted practice. In all cases he applies a regular and fixed gradation of scale, and is content to let his system abide this test.

The reply of the *Edinburgh Reviewer* on the other hand, wholly depends upon an evasion of this fair test, and a recourse to the system of "packing." And yet, as many a dishonest person had done before him, he is very ready to be the first to cry "stop thief," and to accuse Mr. Sadler of that very "packing," to which he himself, and he alone, had just had recourse. We will now give an instance, which we select chiefly because the Reviewer himself declares it to be the most "decisive" of all. We will give his own argument in his own words.

“But we will make another experiment on Mr. Sadler’s tables, if possible more decisive than any of those which we have hitherto made. We will take the four largest divisions into which he has distributed the English counties, and which follow each other in regular order. That our readers may fully comprehend the nature of that packing by which his theory is supported, we will set before them this part of his table.

COUNTIES.	Population on a Square Mile.	Population in 1821.	Square Miles in each County.	Number of Marriages from 1810 to 1820.	Number of Baptisms from 1810 to 1820	Proportion of Births to 100 Marriages.
Lincoln . . .	105	288,800	2748	20,892	87,620	
Cumberland . . .	107	159,300	1478	10,299	45,085	
Northumberland . . .	108	203,000	1871	12,997	45,871	
Hereford . . .	122	105,300	860	6,202	27,909	
Rutland . . .	127	18,900	149	1,286	5,125	
Huntingdon . . .	134	49,800	370	3,766	13,633	
Cambridge . . .	145	124,400	858	9,894	37,491	
Monmouth . . .	145	72,300	498	4,586	13,411	
Dorset . . .	146	147,400	1005	9,554	39,060	
From 100 to 150.				79,476	315,205	396
York, East Riding . . .	151	194,300	1280	15,313	55,606	
Salop . . .	156	210,300	1341	13,613	58,542	
Sussex . . .	162	237,700	1463	15,779	68,700	
Northampton . . .	163	165,800	1017	12,346	42,336	
Wilts . . .	164	226,600	1379	15,654	58,845	
Norfolk . . .	168	351,300	2092	25,752	102,259	
Devon . . .	173	447,900	2579	35,264	130,758	
Southampton . . .	177	289,000	1628	24,561	88,170	
Berks . . .	178	134,700	756	9,301	38,841	
Suffolk . . .	182	276,000	1512	19,885	76,327	
Bedford . . .	184	85,400	463	6,536	22,871	
Buckingham . . .	185	136,800	740	9,505	37,158	
Oxford . . .	186	139,800	752	9,131	39,633	
Essex . . .	193	295,300	1532	19,726	79,792	
Cornwall . . .	198	262,600	1327	17,363	74,611	
Durham . . .	199	211,900	1061	14,787	58,222	
From 150 to 200.				264,516	1,033,039	390
Derby . . .	212	217,600	1026	14,226	58,804	
Somerset . . .	220	362,500	1642	4,356	95,802	
Leicester . . .	221	178,100	804	13,366	47,013	
Nottingham . . .	228	190,700	837	14,296	55,517	
From 200 to 250.				66,244	257,136	388
Hertford . . .	251	132,400	528	7,386	35,741	
Worcester . . .	258	188,200	729	13,178	53,138	
Chester . . .	262	275,500	1052	20,305	75,012	
Gloucester . . .	272	342,600	1256	28,884	90,671	
Kent . . .	282	434,600	1537	33,502	135,060	
From 250 to 300.				103,255	390,322	378

“ These averages look well, undoubtedly, for Mr. Sadler’s theory. The numbers 396, 390, 388, 378, follow each other very speciously in a descending order. But let our readers divide these thirty-four counties into two equal sets of seventeen counties each, and try whether the principle will then hold good. We have made this calculation, and we present them with the following result :

The number of children to 100 marriages is—

In the seventeen counties of England in which there are from			
100 to 177 people on the square mile	.	.	387
In the seventeen counties in which there are from 177 to 282			
people on the square mile	.	.	389

“ The difference is small, but not smaller than differences which Mr. Sadler has brought forward as proofs of his theory. We say, that these English tables no more prove that fecundity increases with the population, than that it diminishes with the population.”

And very soon after, this same honest Reviewer adds,

“ We have nothing more to examine, the tables we have scrutinized, constitute the *whole strength* of Mr. Sadler’s case.

Any ordinary reader would of course take for granted,—not having Mr. Sadler’s work within reach,—that he had here a fair specimen of one, at least, of Mr. Sadler’s proofs ; and, that that proof might be so easily made to assume another aspect, as to be really worth little or nothing. But would any such reader imagine, that the table in question, as it stood in Mr. Sadler’s work, was as follows ;—

COUNTIES.	Population on a Square Mile.	Population in 1821.	Square Miles in each County.	Number of Marriages from 1810 to 1820.	Number of Baptisms from 1810 to 1820.	Proportion of Births to 100 Marriages.
Westmoreland . . .	68	52,400	763	3,385	14,888	420
York, North Riding . .	91	187,400	2048	12,422	51,546	
Under 100 on a sq. mile				15,807	66,434	
Lincoln	105	288,800	2748	20,892	87,620	396
Cumberland	107	159,300	1478	10,299	45,085	
Northumberland . . .	108	203,000	1871	12,997	45,871	
Hereford	122	105,300	860	6,202	27,909	
Rutland	127	18,900	149	1,286	5,125	
Huntingdon	134	49,800	370	3,766	13,633	
Cambridge	145	124,400	858	9,894	37,491	
Monmouth	145	72,300	498	4,586	13,411	
Dorset	146	147,400	1005	9,554	39,060	
From 100 to 150.				79,476	315,205	
York, East Riding . . .	151	194,300	1280	15,313	55,606	390
Salop	156	210,300	1341	13,613	58,542	
Sussex	162	237,700	1463	15,779	68,700	
Northampton	163	165,800	1017	12,346	42,336	
Wilts	164	226,600	1379	15,654	58,845	
Norfolk	168	351,300	2092	25,752	102,259	
Devon	173	447,900	2579	35,264	130,758	
Southampton	177	289,000	1628	24,561	88,170	
Berks	178	134,700	756	9,301	38,841	
Suffolk	182	276,000	1512	19,885	76,327	
Bedford	184	85,400	463	6,536	22,871	
Buckingham	185	136,800	740	9,505	37,158	
Oxford	186	139,800	752	9,131	39,633	
Essex	193	295,300	1532	19,726	79,792	
Cornwall	198	262,600	1327	17,363	74,611	
Durham	199	211,900	1061	14,787	58,222	
From 150 to 200.				264,516	1,033,039	
Derby	212	217,600	1026	14,226	58,804	388
Somerset	220	362,500	1642	24,356	95,802	
Leicester	221	178,100	804	13,366	47,013	
Nottingham	228	190,700	837	14,296	55,517	
From 200 to 250.				66,244	257,136	378
Hertford	251	132,400	528	7,386	35,741	
Worcester	258	188,200	729	13,178	53,138	
Chester	262	275,500	1052	20,305	75,012	
Gloucester	272	342,600	1256	28,884	90,671	
Kent	282	434,600	1537	33,502	135,060	373
From 250 to 300.				103,255	390,322	
Stafford	303	347,900	1148	27,093	105,657	
York, West Riding . . .	309	815,400	2633	62,062	215,061	
Warwick	310	280,000	902	22,786	74,352	353
From 300 to 350.				111,941	395,070	
Surrey	536	406,700	758	27,450	98,592	
Lancaster	585	1,074,000	1831	85,318	274,550	331
From 500 to 600.				112,768	373,142	
Middlesex	4140	1,167,500	289	109,475	269,765	246

So that out of *eight* regular and just divisions, this honest critic had taken the liberty to drop just *four*, taking up only those four which suited his purpose, and “packing” them just in that mode which answered his end, 100 to 177, 177 to 282; a mode which, as we have already observed, at once bespeaks the *adroitness*, but not the *honesty* of the person who has recourse to it.

The general results of *all* the counties of England were as follows:—

In the counties having less than 100 on a mile, there are	
to 100 marriages, births	420
In the counties having from 100 to 150,	396
In the counties having from 150 to 200,	390
In the counties having from 200 to 250,	388
In the counties having from 250 to 300,	378
In the counties having from 300 to 350 on a mile,	353
In the counties having from 500 to 600 on a mile,	331
In the metropolitan county,	246

In what way did the Reviewer meet or reply to this striking and conclusive fact? In no other way than the above, by first garbling the return, professing to give the “whole strength” of it, while he purposely omitted one half, and then “packing” the rest so as to answer his end!

In the very same trickery and disingenuous mode did he deal with *two* other out of Mr. Sadler’s 150 tables, those of France and Prussia; and then coolly added, “We have nothing more to examine: the tables we have scrutinized, constitute the whole strength of Mr. Sadler’s case.”

The fact being, however, that if these three tables, and twenty others, had been torn to atoms, there would still have remained a basis of facts sufficient to have established Mr. Sadler’s system twenty times over.

NOTE D. p. 296.

The following facts relating to the alleged “improvident marriages” of the labouring poor, were given in Mr. Sadler’s speech on the state of the agricultural labourers. There never, perhaps, was a more remarkable instance of a “vulgar error,” having been adopted and asserted, as indubitable truth, by a long series of would-be philosophers and economists.

“The official record before me, (the Report of the Select Committee on Labourers’ wages :) which, as I before mentioned, fully recognizes the miserable condition of the poor, assigning for it as a reason the supposed malversation of the poor laws, goes on to state, as the consequence, “that thereby a surplus population is encouraged—men know they have only to marry.” Aware that these notions are almost universally prevalent; that they are taken as so many truisms and repeated as such; that they embody the notions of the political economists on this subject, who, however widely they may differ, and however warmly they may disagree, are, nevertheless, on this topic, unanimous: and, being perfectly aware, also, that any general attempt to better the condition of the agricultural poor, if these positions were true, would not only be entirely fruitless, but even pernicious, in its ultimate consequences; it is necessary, before I proceed, to examine these confident assertions; and I pledge myself to this House to overthrow the whole of them, and exhibit them, as they in reality are, a set of the most egregious errors that ever darkened the understanding, or deadened the heart of man. I shall do this, not by reasoning, but by arithmetic, by matters of

fact; not by the selection of certain instances to serve my purpose, but by taking those selected by the Committee, doubtless, with a view of advancing its own. It is asserted, then, in this report, that the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland and Lincoln, are nearly, if not totally, exempt from the malversation of the Poor Laws, which produce, according to its authority, these numerous marriages, and this increase of surplus population. The counties, on the other hand, where that malversation is stated to be most general, and where consequently the plague of marriage and population most prevails, are particularised. They are these—Suffolk, Sussex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorsetshire, and Wiltshire. Now, Sir, there were celebrated during the ten years preceding the date of the last census, in the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Lincoln, 45,288 marriages; the arithmetical mean of the population being in that term 606,600, or rather more than one annual wedding to every 133 of the inhabitants. But in the six counties in which it is said we are to look for a great excess of marriages, there were during the same term, on a mean population of 1,046,350 souls, 76,949 marriages, or one annual marriage in 136 only. Yet this comparison, though it decides the dispute, does not give the real truth in its just proportions; the practice of so many marriages in the border counties of Northumberland and Cumberland being celebrated across the boundaries—a fact which Mr. Rickman has mentioned in those censuses, (which are in every point of view an honour to the country as well as to his industry and talents,) as greatly diminishing the registered proportion of such marriages. To arrive, therefore, at a more just comparison, let us take, for instance, the county of Lincoln, which is stated to be free from the evils in question, and that of Dorset, which is particularised as one of those in which

they are the most prevalent and oppressive, each of which, on the authority of an intelligent and humane witness who had resided in both, and deserves to be thus selected. Well, Sir, the marriages in Lincolnshire, computed as before, had for the preceding ten years been rather more than one in 128, while in Dorset the proportion was not as much as one in 144; so groundless, then, so entirely opposed to facts, are the allegations of this report. But I will place the matter in another and yet stronger light, by presenting facts, still authentic and official, of such a character as defy all contradiction or evasion, and which will dispose at once and for ever of the stale and senseless accusations against the poor of these counties. The report says that the misery it describes is "in great part to be attributed to the mal-administration of the Poor Laws during the latter years of the late war." Let us examine the facts in this case also. Taking then the whole period of its duration, namely, that from 1803 to 1813, including and dividing it into two equal parts of five years each, giving half the intermediate year 1808 to each, we shall find that the number of marriages in Suffolk, Sussex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorsetshire, and Wiltshire, was 39,315 in the former half, while in the latter it amounted to 37,417 only. But the number of marriages in the three counties which the Committee pronounce to be free from these malversations advanced during the same period from 22,081 to 23,227. If we take a still wider range we shall find similar results. Taking the average of the first two years of the late war (in order to avoid the casual fluctuations which might affect single ones,) viz. the years 1803 and 1804, we find that the weddings amounted to 7836. I have already stated how much the marriages fell off in the latter period; in fact, in 1812 and 1813, the average number was 6774 only. But when we

extend the inquiry by a reference to the forthcoming census (which I have already diligently examined for this purpose,) to the years immediately preceding the dates of this report, viz. 1822 and 1823, the average number of marriages in these two years will be found to be 7,767; consequently less than it had been nearly twenty years before; and that of the terminating years, 1829 and 1830, will exhibit, I think, the same average as compared with the first—still almost precisely stationary, though they ought to have advanced to upwards of 10,000, without showing any relative increase; the population of these counties (exclusive of Brighton, throughout the whole calculation) during these twenty-eight years, having increased upwards of 30 per cent. So entirely opposed to truth, therefore, are the assumptions of our economists regarding the habits and condition of our labouring poor, and so greatly do they err as to the means of remedy.”

NOTE E. p. 327.

Communications to the Board of Agriculture, on subjects relative to the Husbandry and Internal Improvement of the Country. London: 1797. Part. ii. pp. 77—84.

V.—Letter from the Earl of Winchelsea, to the president of the Board of Agriculture, on the advantages of cottagers renting land.*

* This very valuable paper was drawn up at the request of the President of the Board of Agriculture, in consequence of a conversation which passed at the Farmers' Club; when the Earl of Winchelsea stated that the custom of letting small portions of land to labourers, which prevailed in parts of Rutlandshire, was found to be of great utility. Sir John Sinclair then desired that Lord Winchelsea would inform him of all the particulars he was acquainted with,

South Street, January 4, 1796.

SIR,

At your request, I made what enquiries I could, during the short time I was in the country, as to the situation of labourers renting small quantities of land; and am more and more confirmed in the opinion I have long had, that nothing is so beneficial, both to them and to the land-owners, as their having land to be occupied either for the keeping of cows, or as gardens, according to circumstances.

By means of these advantages, the labourers and their families live better, and are consequently more fit to endure labour; it makes them more contented and more attached to their situation, and it gives them a sort of independence, which makes them set a higher value upon their character. In the neighbourhood in which I live, men so circumstanced, are almost always considered as the most to be depended upon and trusted; the possessing a little property certainly gives a spur to industry: as a proof of this, it has almost always happened to me, that when a labourer has obtained a cow and land sufficient to maintain her, the first thing he has thought of has been, how he could save money enough to buy another; and I have almost always had applications for more land from those people so circumstanced. There are several labourers in my neighbourhood, who have got on in this manner, till they now keep two, three, and some four cows, and yet are amongst the hardest working men in the country, and the best labourers. I believe there are from seventy to eighty labourers upon my estate in Rutland, who keep from one to four cows each; and I have always heard that

respecting that custom; which being read at the Board of Agriculture, and much approved of, was ordered to be printed.

they are hard-working industrious men ; they manage their land well, and always pay their rent.

With regard to the profit they make of a cow, I am informed that those who manage well, will clear about twenty-pence a week, or £4. 6s. 8d. per annum by each cow, supposing the rent of the land, levies, expences of hay-making, &c., to cost them £4., exclusive of house-rent ; this is calculated, supposing all the produce sold ; but whether this is too low, or how it is, I cannot say ; but certainly those who have a cow, appear to be (in comparison with those who have none,) much more than twenty-pence per week richer : it may be owing to the superior industry of those families. I must observe, that they keep sheep during the winter upon their cow-pasture, at the rate of two, and in some cases three, at 2s. 6d. each, for each cow-pasture. This is included in the above estimate of profit : the skim-milk is also valued. Some of them, where the land is not good, do not pay so much. I put down £4, supposing the land tolerably good, and it is certainly more advantageous to them to occupy good land at a high rent, than poor land at a low one. They all agree, that two cows are more than twice as profitable as one, particularly when the suckling of calves is the system pursued. The generality of the people near me suckle calves ; some make butter, and a few make cheese ; some buy the supernumerary lambs of the farmers, and rear them up by hand ; and where they have more than one or two cow-gaits, stock with sheep at the rate, in summer, of three for a cow-gait. Those who have families, and one cow, generally make butter, for the sake of having skim-milk for their children, which is an article rarely to be obtained by the poor. When a labourer has the offer of a cow-gait, and land for winter provision, and has not money enough to purchase a cow, he generally applies to his employer,

who will in all probability advance him some money ; and the inhabitants of the parish, if the man has a good character, frequently subscribe to set him up, from charitable motives, and from a persuasion that by this means his family will never want relief from the parish : and this is so much the case, that when a labourer dies, and his son takes his land and stock, he in some cases maintains the widow. I know of several instances of labourer's widows who are past work, who are maintained by their sons, who could not otherwise have lived, without parish relief. In a village near me, where there are a great number of labourers who keep cows, the poor's rate is not at this time above sixpence in the pound ; the number of inhabitants 335.

When a poor man's cow dies, it is certainly a great distress, and sometimes the owner is obliged to ask assistance to replace her, and somehow or other, they always contrive to get one ; as I scarcely ever knew a cow-gait given up for want of ability to obtain a cow, except in the case of old and infirm women, who are left without children : they (unless they have some assistance from the parish,) cannot live upon the profits of a cow, nor can they manage it properly. Should a case of this sort occur, the parish officers would act very unwisely in refusing assistance ; as a very trifling allowance, together with the cow, would enable the woman to live ; whereas by refusing any assistance, they oblige the woman to part with her cow, and then she must have her whole subsistence from them. I applied to Mr. Barker of Lyndon, Rutland, for some information, with regard to the antiquity of the custom in that county, of letting cow-gaits to labourers, and received the following letter from him :—

Lyndon, January 14, 1796.

“ MY LORD,

“ I have considered your Lordship’s question as to the labourers keeping cows, and think it is certainly a very useful thing for them to do so ; most of the poor people of this parish do keep cows, one, or two, or three to a family, and a great advantage it is to them ; so that we can hardly say there are any industrious persons here who are really poor, as they are in some places where they have not that advantage. It has been the practice in this place, time out of mind. We have a ground called the Cottager’s Close, wherein the poor, for an easy rent, keep eighteen cows, and, I suppose it was laid out for them at the inclosure of the lordship in 1624.

“ On that close the cows go from May-day till St. Andrew’s, and in winter they take them into their homesteads ; and while several neighbouring lordships were open-field, they could buy hay reasonably to feed them with at that season ; and we have several little takes of a few pounds a year, rented by cottagers ; and I have made some new ones ; for since the enclosure of these parishes, hay is grown very dear, and is scarcely to be had at all.

“ I believe it always was the custom for every one to keep a milch cow, who could raise money enough to buy one, and could get keeping for it. I imagine it was so in this parish long before it was enclosed. I think there are cottagers who have a right of a common in Hambledon cow-pasture ; but your Lordship must know that matter much better than I can do. There are little estates and cottagers who have a right of common in North Luffenham cow-pasture. There are some persons as Edith Weston, who had such before the enclosure, and I believe it was the same in other towns also ; but I am sorry to say, that I am afraid most of those cottages were taken away

at the time of the several enclosures, and the land thrown to the farms; wherein I think they did very wrong: but we have an instance of a new enclosure, where the good old custom is still retained; for Sir John Rushout has made a considerable number at Ketton. I believe the cow-pasture and ploughing-land to each cottage is four acres. I wish, and I have often said so, that Parliament would make it a rule never to grant an inclosure, without a close laid out for the benefit of the poor.

“ I am, &c.,

“ THOMAS BARKER.”

I can add to this, that upon my own estate, the custom is, I believe, of the greatest antiquity: I have labourers, tenants, in whose families the lands they now occupy have been for near two hundred years; and they have, as far as I can learn, been generally good labourers, and received no relief from the parish. I have made several new takes of that sort, and have always found them to answer.

With regard to their manuring their meadow-ground; by keeping their cows in hovel during winter, and by keeping a pig or two, which they generally do, they contrive to make manure; their employer generally sells to them, or gives them, a small quantity of straw, and sometimes they procure fern, or collect weeds.

The situation of labourers may, I think, be classed as follows:—

1st. Those who have a sufficient quantity of grass inclosed land to enable them to keep one or more cows, winter and summer, and a garden near their house.

This is, in my opinion, the best situation for a labourer; as, except the hay-making, the rest of the business is done by his wife, and his labour is not interrupted. Where a grass-field is allotted to a certain number, and each have

a field for mowing near their house; or where there are two fields, one grazed, and one mown alternately, and properly stinted, it will be as advantageous, or nearly so, as having small inclosures to themselves.

This can only take place in countries where there is an abundance of grass-land.

2ndly. Those who have a summer pasture for their cow, and some arable land, upon which they grow the winter provision.

This is not so advantageous as No. 1, because more of their time is taken up by the arable land; however, as they must, in order to make any hay, have part of the land sown in grass, the labour is so much as to be hurtful to them. I have several such upon my estate, which answer very well. This is adapted to countries where there is a mixture of pasture and arable.

3rdly. Those who have a right of common for the summer-keep of the cow, and a meadow or arable ground, or a meadow in common, for the winter provision.

This would be like the two former, were it not that nine commons out of ten are so much overstocked, that the summer-keep is very bad. This is a very great loss, and if the meadow is in common, it is another disadvantage. It is certain that upon an enclosure, if the owners choose it, the labourers who keep cows may be placed in a much better situation than they were; inasmuch as inclosed land is more valuable to occupiers of every description, than commons and open fields. Garden-ground may also be allotted to them, and others; which cannot be done while the land remains uninclosed. I am persuaded, that where these things are attended to, very few objections to an enclosure will arise on the part of the labourers, and that the landowners will have the satisfaction of benefiting the poor, and at the same time of making their

own property more valuable, by adopting what, in all probability, will be the means of keeping down the poor's rate.

I suppose gardens near the houses to all these: should that not be the case, as they have land, they may raise garden-stuff; but if their land is at a distance from their houses, it is not so advantageous: and if their take is all grass, they can find no ground to dig, except, perhaps, where a haystack has been placed the preceding year.

4th. Those who have a right of common, and a garden.

This is certainly very beneficial to them; geese and pigs may be kept upon the common, and the latter fed with the produce of the garden, and a small quantity of purchased food.

5th. Those who have a right of common, and no garden.

This, unless fuel is obtained, is of no great value to them: if fuel is obtained, it is of great value, and the loss of it is difficult to be made up to them.

6th. Those who have several acres of arable land, and no summer pasturage for a cow.

This is, I believe, of no sort of use to the labourer; for, though he may cultivate part of the land as a garden, the continued labour it would require to stall-feed a cow, winter and summer, and the quantity of the land he must till, would occupy so much of his time, that the take would, upon the whole, be injurious to him; even supposing the land inclosed, and contiguous to his house: if at a distance, or not inclosed, the disadvantage would be still greater. I am sorry to differ in opinion on this subject from Mr. Barclay,* but perhaps in other parts of the island his plan of a take entirely arable might answer. I am persuaded it would not in the parts I am acquainted with, and that the farmers

* Robert Barclay, Esq. of Urie, M. P.

would not sell them hay, which is a part of his plan. I believe that a summer pasture for the cows is absolutely necessary to make it of advantage to the labourers who keep them.

7th. Those who have a garden near their house.

This is the best thing that can be done for labourers in arable countries, and where there are other reasons which prevent them from keeping cows.*

8th. Those who have no land whatever.

This is a very bad situation for the labourer to be placed in, both for his comfort, and for the education of his children. When a labourer is possessed of cattle, his children are taught early in life the necessity of taking care of them, and acquire some knowledge of their treatment; and if he has a garden, they learn to dig and weed, and their time is employed in useful industry, by which means they are more likely to acquire honest and industrious habits, than those who are bred up in the poverty and laziness we too often see; for I believe that it is a fact, that extreme poverty begets idleness.

For these reasons, I am clearly of opinion, that the letting land to labourers is of great utility both to them, to the landowners, and to the community; for, though in every village some idle people will be found who are not fit to be intrusted with, or capable of receiving benefit

* As land cultivated as a garden will produce a greater quantity of food for man than in any other way, and as four-fifths of the labour bestowed upon their gardens will be done by the labourers at extra hours, and when they and their children would otherwise be unemployed, it may not be too much to say, that 100,000 acres allotted to cottagers as garden ground, will give a produce equal to what 150,000 acres cultivated in the ordinary way would give, and that without occupying more of the time they would otherwise give to the farmers who employ them, than the cultivation of 20,000 acres would require.

from land, still the greater number will ; and it may have the effect of making those industrious who would not otherwise have been so. When circumstances will admit of it, their having land enough to enable them to keep cows is the most desirable thing for them ; but a very great part of the island will not, in my opinion, allow of that system being pursued. Where there is hardly anything but arable land, and also in the neighbourhood of large towns, the value of grass land is too great to allow of labourers renting it with advantage ; a garden may, however, be allotted to them in almost every situation, and will be found of infinite use to them. In countries where it has never been the custom for labourers to keep cows, it would be very difficult to introduce it ; but where no gardens have been annexed to the cottages, it is sufficient to give the ground, and the labourer is sure to know what to do with it, and will reap an immediate benefit from it. Of this I have had experience in several places, but particularly in two parishes near Newport Pagnell, Bucks, where there never had been any gardens annexed to the labourers' houses, and where, upon land being allotted to them, they all, without a single exception, cultivated their gardens extremely well, and profess receiving the greatest benefit from them. I beg to observe, that when I mention cow-pastures, I also suppose there to be a sufficiency of land to enable the cow to be kept tolerably well both in summer and winter : if that is not the case, I believe that the cow is but of little benefit to the owner ; and when I mention gardens, I always mean large gardens, from half a rood to a rood, or more, if the land is poor. Those very small spots of a few square yards, which we sometimes see near cottages, I can hardly call gardens : I think there should be as much as will produce all the garden-stuff the family consumes, and enough for a pig, with the addition of a

little meal. I think they ought to pay the same rent that a farmer would pay for the land, and no more. I am persuaded that it frequently happens that a labourer lives in a house at twenty or thirty shillings rent, which he is unable to pay; to which, if a garden of a rood was added, for which he would have to pay five or ten shillings a year more, that he would be enabled, by the profit he would derive from the garden, to pay the rent of the house, &c., with great advantage to himself.

As I before mentioned, some difficulties may occur in establishing the custom of labourers keeping cows in those parts of the country, where no such custom has existed : wherever it has or does exist, it ought by all means to be encouraged, and not suffered to fall into disuse, as has been the case to a great degree in the midland counties, one of the causes of which, I apprehend to be, the dislike the generality of farmers have to seeing the labourers rent any land. Perhaps one of their reasons for disliking this is, that the land, if not occupied by the labourers, would fall to their own share ; and another, I am afraid, is, that they rather wish to have the labourers more dependent upon them, for which reasons they are always desirous of hiring the house and land occupied by a labourer, under pretence that, by that means, the landlord will be secure of his rent, and that they will keep the house in repair. This the agents of estates are too apt to give into, as they find it much less trouble to meet six than sixty tenants at a rent-day, and by this means avoid the being sometimes obliged to hear the wants and complaints of the poor : all parties, therefore, join in persuading the landlord, who, it is natural to suppose (unless he has time and inclination to investigate the matter very closely), will agree to this their plan, from the manner in which it comes recommended to him ; and it is in this manner that the labourers have been dis-

possessed of their cow-pastures in various parts of the midland counties. The moment the former obtains his wish, he takes every particle of the land to himself, and relets to the labourer, who, by this means, is rendered miserable, the poor-rate increased, the value of the estate to the landowner diminished, and the house suffered to go to decay; which, when once fallen, the tenant will never rebuild, but the landlord must, at a considerable expense. Whoever travels through the midland counties, and will take the trouble of inquiring, will generally receive for answer, that formerly there were a great many cottagers who kept cows, but that the land is now thrown to the farmers: and, if he inquires still further, he will find, that, in those parishes, the poor-rates have increased in an amazing degree, more than according to the average rise throughout England. It is to be hoped, that as the quantity of land required for gardens is very small, it will not excite the jealousy of the farmers.

I must, however, say, that I do by no means allude to all farmers, or to all agents of estates; for I can, with truth say, that I know a great many farmers who are convinced of the utility of letting land to labourers, and who have voluntarily given up land to be applied to that purpose, notwithstanding they had leases; and I also have the pleasure of being acquainted with agents of estates, who have the most proper and liberal ideas upon these subjects. I cannot conclude without expressing my hearty wish for the success of the General Inclosure Bill which you are now framing, particularly as I know that it is your wish and intention carefully to guard the rights of the cottager, and to consult the interest of the labourer. By the attention of the legislature, a great deal may be done; but still an infinite deal more must depend upon the proprietors of estates. I therefore hope that some more able advocate

than I am will plead the cause of the labourers, that all the landowners in the island may be convinced of the necessity of attending to the comfort and happiness of those most useful members of society.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
WINCHILSEA.

Sir John Sinclair, Bart., &c. &c.

Note F. p. 566.

IN Mr. Sadler's version of the Book of Psalms, the main object which he always kept in view, was, a close and almost literal adherence to the text in common use. The lxviiiith, which is given below, is almost the only instance in which he allows himself to use any freedom.

PSALM LXVIII.

Let God arise, and be his foes
Scatter'd before his awful look ;
Let those that hate him and oppose,
Flee, by his swifter wrath o'ertook ;
As smoke before the winds of heaven,
As wax amid the rage of fire,
Before his face dissolv'd and driven,
May all his impious foes expire.

But may his awful presence fill
His chosen flock with boundless joy,
Sing unto God, sing praises still,
The eternal God exalt on high ;

Extol him on the heavens who rides,
And in the pillar'd cloud or flame,
From thence his chosen people guides,
Your God, ye joyful hosts proclaim.

God from his high and holy place
Still o'er his own in pity bends;
The father of the fatherless,
The friendless widows he befriends;
He bids the sigh of sorrow cease,
He breaks the captive's heavy chain;
Breathes o'er his flock celestial peace,
While rebel hosts his wrath sustain.

Jehovah, when thou wentest forth,
And march'd'st through the wilderness,
Then dropp'd the heavens, and shook the earth,
And fled the sea before thy face:
E'en Sinai's lofty summits bow'd
While awful signs and sounds forthtell
The presence of th' approaching God,
The mighty God of Israel.

Thou sentest, Lord, a gracious rain,
And didst thy heritage refresh,
And plenteous o'er the desert plain
Thy manna shower'd and feather'd flesh;
The hidden stream beside them flow'd,
And still thy congregation dwelt
Amidst thy mercies,—still, O God,
The poor thy constant goodness felt.

God gave the word, and heard afar
By countless companies proclaim'd,
Forth from the desert rush'd the war,
And o'er devoted Canaan flam'd;
Kings and their armies fled apace,
While Israel's daughters spoil'd their foes;
Scattered before the Almighty's face,
Their hosts dissolved like Salmon's snows.

Though ye among the pots have lain,
Defil'd by hard and sordid toil,
Yet now a vast exulting train
Ye move, and shine in Egypt's spoil ;
So wings the dove her joyous way
When to the day her plumes unfold,
The silver's soft unsullied ray
Still interchang'd with glowing gold.

Is yonder high and craggy steep,
Proud Bashan's hill, the hill of God ?
Ye lofty hills, in vain ye leap,
Onward we urge our destin'd road.
This is the mountain of the Lord,
In which our God desires to dwell,
And here eternally ador'd
Shall rest the ark of Israel.

Lo, God ascends his seat divine,
And twice ten thousand chariots leads,
His train unnumber'd angels join,
From earth to heaven the triumph spreads ;
Not e'en from Sinai's brow sublime,
So bright his sacred presence shone,
As from the holy hill we climb,
Where God shall dwell among his own.

Thou hast ascended up on high,
And in thy bright triumphant train
Captive hast led captivity ;
Thou hast received gifts from men,
Yea, even the rebellious prove,
His mercy's all-victorious power,
That God, the Almighty God of love
Might dwell among them evermore.

Blest be the Lord whose daily care,
Thus loads with benefits the land ;
Our Saviour still designs to spare,
When issuing at his dread command,

Death o'er the field triumphant stalks
And deals th' inevitable blow
On helmed heads and hair-plum'd scalps
And lays the pride of battle low.

I'll bring again, the Lord hath said,
My chosen seed from Bashan's coasts,
As e'rst their captive sires I led,
Through desert wilds and adverse hosts ;
As when I brought them through the deeps,
Again I will display my power ;
Thy foot shalt tread on slaughter'd heaps,
Thy dogs shall dip their tongues in gore.

Thus have we seen thy march divine,
Thy goings, O my King and God !
With holy hands thy sacred shrine,
Translated to its high abode ;
First came the vocal choirs, the strain
Unnumber'd instruments prolong,
Amongst the bands a virgin train
Mov'd to the timbrel's sound along,

The countless congregations sprung
From Israel's fountain next succeed,
Chanting thy praise they pour along
Tribe after tribe with endless tread ;
Their ruler little Benjamin,
And Judah's chiefs successive shone,
The princes clos'd the swelling scene
From Naphtali and Zebulun.

O Israel, 'tis Jehovah's hand
That has thy strength and glory brought
Still stablish, Lord, thy chosen land,
And all the wonders thou hast wrought,
Then o'er thy Salem's sacred wall
A loftier temple soon shall shine,
And distant kings before thee fall,
And bring their offerings to thy shrine.

Rebuke the company of spears,
The monster of the reeds confound
In vain let hecatombs of steers
And calves unnumber'd bleed around :
While thus with songs and dance the crowd
Invoke their gods, and mount the car,
Tread down and scatter far abroad
The people that delight in war.

Then Egypt's princes shall repair,
A peaceful band to thine abode,
And Ethiopia from afar
Shall soon stretch out her hands to God ;
The song of praise from clime to clime,
Shall spread, and o'er earth's kingdoms fly,
And swelling down the stream of time
It's echo fill eternity.

He on the heaven of heavens sublime
Rides, and in awful thunders rolls,
And thence his mighty voice, all time,
All space, all being still controls ;
To him ascribe ye power divine,
Wisdom supreme, unwearied love,
Whose glories o'er his Israel shine
And fill his shining courts above.

O God, how terrible art thou,
From where thy presence deigns to dwell,
When smokes thy wrath against the foe
And burns e'en to the lowest hell,
That presence, which shall ever shine,
Auspicious from thy blest abode,
The source of Israel's strength divine,
For ever blessed be our God.

PSALM XXIX.

GIVE unto the Lord,
Ye mighty, give praise ;
Give unto the Lord
All glory and grace ;
Approach in the duty
Of worship his shrine
And still in the beauty
Of holiness join.

The voice of the Lord
Midst darkness on high
And water-floods heard
Now burst from the sky.
The winds who controlleth
And waves by his word
Now gloriously rolleth
The voice of the Lord.

The voice of the Lord
The Cedar-trees breaks,
Hills melt at his word
The wilderness quakes,
Yea, Lebanon boundeth
And leaps like a herd,
And Sirion resoundeth
The voice of the Lord.

The voice of the Lord
His anger proclaims,
The voice of the Lord
Divideth the flames ;
The wilderness quaketh
Rebuked by his ire,
Yea, Kadesh he shaketh
With tempests of fire.

The voice of the Lord
His presence proclaims,
On Kedesh is poured
A tempest of flames ;
The forests are lighted
And fires roll along,
The thickets were frightened
The hinds cast their young.

The voice of the Lord
Thus speaking aloud,
His name be adored
His courts let us crowd ;
There full of his wonders
Our tongues let us raise
And mix with his thunders
The voice of our praise.

The Lord sits upon
The tempest and flood,
He speaks—they are gone,
He reigneth—our God
The Lord still shall strengthen
His flock, and increase ;
And to them shall lengthen
The blessings of peace.

PSALM LXXVI.

In Jewry is Jehovah known,
His name is great in Israel,
In Salem is still his sacred throne,
In Zion he vouchsafes to dwell.

And there he brake the sword, and shield,
And quenched the arrow winged with fire,
And rode triumphant o'er the field,
And bade the war at once expire.

Thou, Zion, art more glorious far,
Than all the mountains of thy foes,
In vain with fierce and impious war,
Their hosts thy hallowed wall enclose.

They slept intent on morrow's toil ;
They dreamt of spoils from conquest drawn ;
But they themselves became that spoil,
They slept the sleep that knows no dawn.

The warrior's hand yet grasps the spear,
The harness'd steed is in his stall,
Close by his car the charioteer,
But still, and cold, and lifeless all.

They fell at thy rebuke, O God,
How dire their sleep ! more dreadful far
The deathful silence of the crowd,
Than all the rush and din of war.

Thou, thou alone, art to be fear'd,
Ah ! who shall in thine anger stand,
Thou who in judgment hast appear'd,
And saved a meek defenceless land.

From heaven thy judgment issued forth,
No human hand perform'd thy will,
No human eye beheld,—the earth
Sole witness, trembled and was still.

Surely the wrath of sinful man
Shall praise thee, and thy will perform ;
Thou its remainder shalt restrain,
And calm at once the restless storm.

O vow, and pay your vows to God,
Recount his glorious triumphs o'er.
Ye nations, to his temple crowd,
Bring presents, and his name adore.

He shall the pride of princes quell,
And lay the boastful warrior low :
His wrath resistless, terrible,
The impious kings of earth shall know.

PSALM LXXXVII.

DEEP in yon high and hallowed hills
Are his foundations laid !
There God, infinity who fills,
His earthly seat has made ;
And loves than Jacob's dwellings more
The gates of his abode ;
Thy glory spreads the nations o'er,
Thou city of our God.

While heathens, boastful of their birth,
Egyptian plains admire,
Or Babylon, the pride of earth,
Or sea-commanding Tyre ;
Or fierce Philistia's warlike towers,
Or Rahab's high abode,—
A happier natal seat is our's,
The city of our God.

While these in ruins old shall leave
A scarce remembered name,
New honours Zion shall receive,
New sons her praise proclaim ;
Established by his power divine,
Her gates the world shall crowd ;
A new Jerusalem shall shine,
The city of our God.

Soon shall the Lord the nations count
And write his people's name ;
Then shall thy sons, O holy mount,
Eternal honours claim ;

Then wake, ye tongues, ye tuneful strings,
His courts, his altars crowd ;
In Thee are all my living springs
Thou city of our God.

PSALM XC.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place,
Our refuge still from ancient days ;
But ere to man thy bounties flow'd,
Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or thou hadst form'd the heavens and earth,
From everlasting thou art God !

A thousand ages in thy sight,
Quick as the watches of a night,
Succeed, and seem as yesterday ;
Years roll on years, a restless stream,
And pass for ever, as a dream,
That fades before the morning ray.

But man, how short his mournful date,
Fallen from his first immortal state,
Thou bidst him to his dust return ;
He blooms, to flourish but an hour
And fade for ever, like a flower
Cut down and wither'd since the morn.

Sin blasted his immortal blooms,
And wrath his lingering life consumes,
Which like a mournful tale he spends ;
While full before thy flaming eyes,
Each secret sin uncover'd lies,
And judgment o'er his soul impends.

Our threescore years and ten below.
Or added days of toil and woe,
Shall soon be all for ever flown ;
But who can know thy wrathful power,
Which burns beyond death's fearful hour
In everlasting worlds unknown.

O spare us, save us, God of grace!
Teach us to number so our days
That we to wisdom may apply ;
O Lord how long ? return, relent,
Thy guilty servants bid repent,
Believe, and live, and never die.

O satisfy us with thy grace,
So shall we spend our transient days
Rejoicing in redeeming love;
Affliction we shall fear no more,
Life shall be peace, and death the door
To everlasting life above.

The work of grace thus may we know,
Thy glory to our children show,
Thy beauty be upon us, Lord !
Establish, for they all are thine,
Establish thou our works divine,
And be thyself our great reward.

PSALM XCIII.

The Lord Jehovah reigns,
With majesty array'd,
And girt with strength divine maintains
The world he made ;
Thou ere the world began
Establishedst thy throne,
And while eternal ages ran,
Didst reign alone.

The floods lift up, O Lord,
The floods lift up their voice ;
But mightier than their waves, thy word,
Than all their noise :
Thy testimonies, thus,
O Lord are very sure,
And holiness becomes thine house
For evermore.

PSALM CXXII.

They said, while joy my heart o'erflow'd,
Come, go we to the house of God ;
Soon, O Jerusalem, our feet
Within thy hallow'd gates shall meet :
Jerusalem a city stands
Compactly built by heavenly hands ;
And onwards, thronging all the road,
The tribes go up to worship God.

As near the hallowed hills we draw,
We lift our eyes, our hearts, with awe ;
There judgment sits, there stands the throne
Of David and of David's Son :
We join our prayers for Zion's peace ;
Her lovers prosper and increase !
Peace be within her walls, and bless
Her palaces with plenteousness !

PSALM CXXXVII.

Reclin'd where proud Euphrates flows,
Our hours of rest to grief we gave,
And thought on Zion, 'till our woes
Fell mingled with each murmuring wave ;
Our harps on willows round us hung
Silent, save when the fitful gale
Sigh'd o'er the strings which wildly rung
And seem'd our sorrows to bewail.

Meanwhile our cruel spoilers found
Our sad retreat, and mock'd our wrongs :
Come, wake your harps, your God resound,
And sing us one of Zion's songs !
How shall Jehovah's songs arise,
The mirth of foes in foreign lands ?
A silent heap his temple lies
And ever mute its tuneful bands ?

If I forget Jerusalem
When grief my anxious hours employs,
If mindless of the mournful theme
I prove amidst my dearest joys,
O never to that much-lov'd land
Restor'd, may I his praises sing,
Mute be my tongue, and my right hand
Forgetful of the vocal string.

Ye asked a song ! the song divine
Comes full of our prophetic God !
Edom who bade you raze his shrine,
Edom shall feel his vengeful rod :
But, daughter of proud Babylon,
See in our doom thy mightier woes ;
The wrath, the ruin comes, when none
Shall tell where thy proud turrets rose.

Note G. p. 614.

If we venture to offer a hasty outline of a National monetary system, it is with a full sense of the various difficulties which must be overcome, before any such scheme could be put into operation. We are aware that Charters and Acts of Parliament innumerable must be rescinded or repealed ; and all the obstacles which large and various interests could interpose, be overborne. Still however, we remain of opinion, that the present system is so utterly vicious in principle, and so extensively calamitous in practice, that no statesman worthy of the name, can much longer permit its continuance.

Nothing can be more certain, than that fluctuations in the currency cause fluctuations in trade ; extensive enlargements producing high prices ; great contractions, the opposite extreme of a ruinous depression.

That a few trading companies of bank-note makers, in London, Manchester, and Liverpool, should have it in their power to create a sudden and fictitious prosperity at will, is clearly a monstrosity in legislation.

But that the same parties should be also at liberty, whenever they please, to cancel and destroy a fourth or a third of all the money in the country, and thus to plunge all persons engaged in trade and commerce into the greatest distress and confusion, seems so extraordinary an arrangement of one of the most important concerns of the nation, that if, in place of being our own case, it had been narrated of some distant realm or government, the folly would have appeared too gross to be easily credited.

It scarcely seems possible for any principle to be more self-evidently true than this,—that the money of any country ought to be exclusively issued, and absolutely controlled, by the government of that country.

For an outline of a mode by which this should be arranged, let the following serve. We speak of England and Wales only, because the facts as to the rest of the empire are not so easily attainable.

It appears, by the experience of the last ten or fifteen years, that a paper-currency of thirty millions, for England and Wales, would suffice for the purposes of trade. At the present moment we have but four or five and twenty millions; and from this cause chiefly, arises the existing distress.

Let the government, then, have a paper-mint, for the coinage and issue of thirty millions of paper-money. The first object to be attained, should be, steadiness of supply;—hence this sum should never be exceeded; nor seldom much diminished.

Its exchangeability for gold should form no part of the plan. These notes, in fact, should be small Exchequer

4 miles

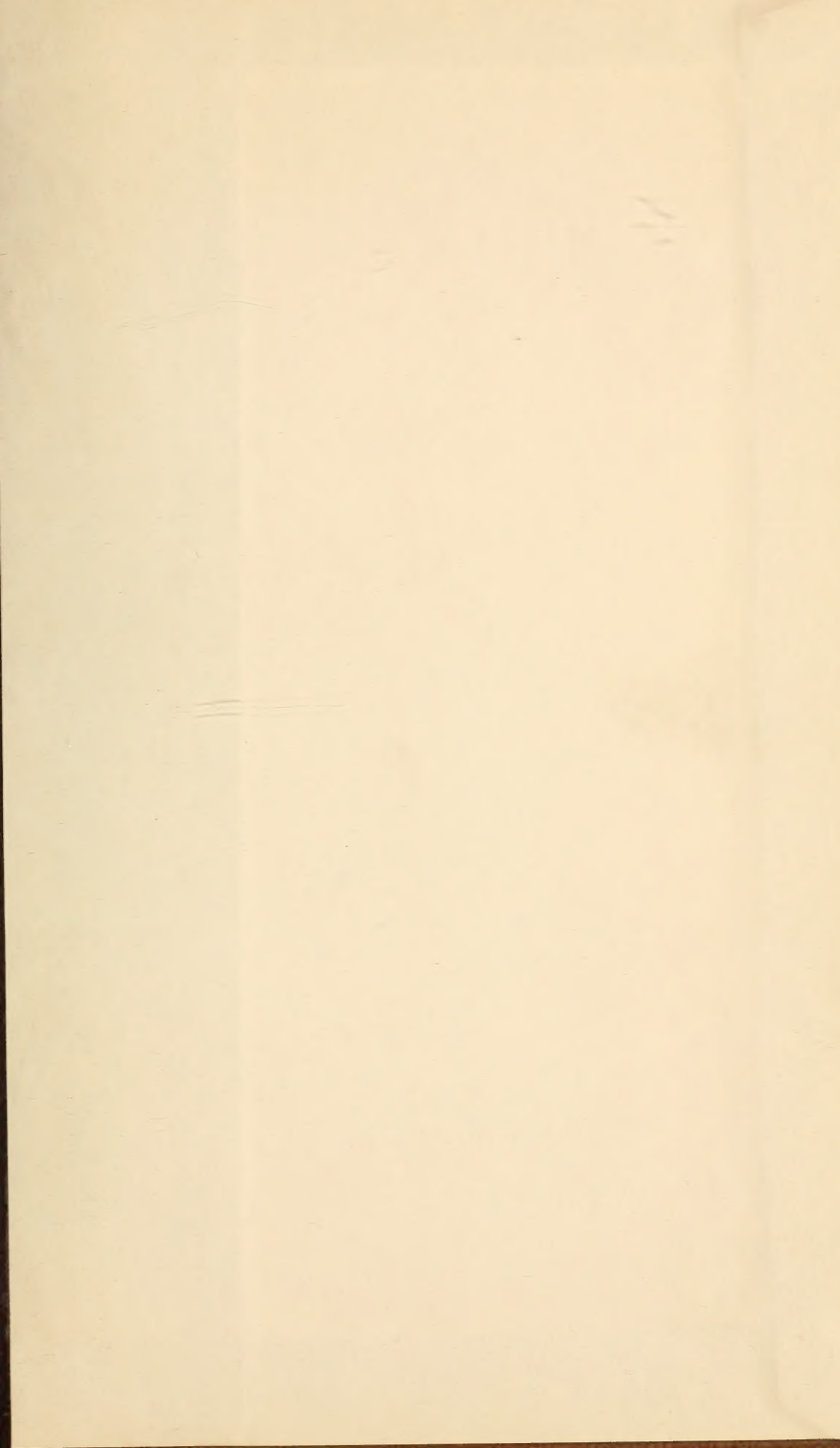
Bills, bearing no interest. The interest on the National Debt should be paid in this paper; and it should be receivable for all taxes, and custom or excise duties, &c.

One obvious advantage would be, the gain to the nation of the annual interest on this thirty millions, minus only the expence of the establishment.

Another great benefit would be, a better system for country banks. This might be thus arranged:

Wherever any wealthy man or men, in a country town, wished to carry on the trade of bankers; let them apply to the government-office for issuing paper-money; and let them offer as security either funded property, or unincumbered freehold land. Their offer being accepted, they might have to the extent of 75 per cent of their funded capital, or 50 per cent of their landed property, advanced to them in this paper-money. There would thus be only one description of paper-money; which could never become worthless; which would be equally current in Cornwall or in Cumberland; and the security of which would put an end to all those calamities which, in the course of the last twelve months, have befallen more than twenty of the provincial towns of England and Wales.

The trade of these local bankers, then, would consist in the legitimate traffic in money; keeping the hoards of the frugal; giving accommodation to the speculative; paying to government two and a half or three per cent for the paper-money advanced; and realizing four or five per cent from those to whom they lent it.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 020 704 048 4